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Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation

FINAL REPORT

Organizational Structure Review of the Personnel Accounting Community

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Executive Summary

This report provides an executive summary of the review conducted by the Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) in response to Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter's August 26, 2013 tasking to CAPE to assess the organizational structure, processes, and metrics of the Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel Accounting Community (Appendix B). In the course of this review, a team led by CAPE met with twenty-six government offices to gain greater understanding of the personnel accounting mission and how organizations in the community contribute to it (see Appendix C). The objective of the study is to provide recommendations to improve the conduct of this mission.

Background. There are more than 83,000 unaccounted-for American personnel from past conflicts. In FY 2013, DoD accounted for sixty of these personnel. The U.S. government expends approximately \$190 million per year and employs more than 750 people on this mission. The FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directed DoD to have the capability and capacity for 200 identifications (IDs) per year beginning in FY 2015. In response, DoD added 253 positions and more than \$300 million during the preparation of the FY 2012–2016 President's Budget Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) to the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Accounting Command (JPAC).

A July 2013 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled "Top-Level Leadership Attention Needed to Resolve Longstanding Challenges in Accounting for Missing Persons from Past Conflicts," states that a fragmented organizational structure undermines DoD's capability and capacity to accomplish its missing persons accounting mission. In response, DoD agreed to consider options for reorganizing the Accounting Community.

Following the start of the CAPE review in August, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the House Armed Services Committee sent multiple letters to the Secretary of Defense stressing concerns about the Accounting Community mission. Congress also expressed its concern in Section 581 of the FY 2014 NDAA, which requires that the Department submit a report about the POW/MIA Accounting Community no later than June 2014. The report must include an assessment of the feasibility and advisability of reorganizing the community into a single, central command.

Understanding the Mission. Each conflict presents a different set of challenges for recovering remains of missing personnel. In Southeast Asia (SEA), climate and soil conditions make finding remains increasingly unlikely and, when found, remains can be

too diminutive to enable adequate deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) testing. Many sites have been investigated repeatedly while others are too dangerous to attempt.

Korean War losses pose a different set of challenges. In North Korea, where the majority of losses are located, access is part of a much larger political issue. In South Korea, rapid urbanization during the last few decades has resulted in construction of infrastructure on land that contains the remains of lost American service members. Also, about one-third of the service members from the Korean War that are considered recoverable are buried in Hawaii as unknowns in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, commonly referred to as the “Punchbowl.” Conducting DNA analysis on remains in the Punchbowl is difficult due to the use of formaldehyde for preservation during the burial process.

For World War II losses, a key issue involves how to categorize and prioritize the massive number of losses. Approximately 40,000 World War II losses are presumed to be under water and will never be recovered.¹ Because these losses are still officially listed as unaccounted-for, and there is a public expectation that everyone on the unaccounted-for list will be pursued, there can be a misperception that these cases are currently active or that they someday will become active. A second challenge is that expanding operations into new areas of responsibility, such as European nations, has been more difficult than expected. Also, a standard process for disinterment has only recently been established and it is politically sensitive.

Process of Identifying Human Remains. The existing identification process is complex and involves many parts of the Accounting Community (see Appendix D). One of the first steps in the process is gaining access to foreign countries. The State Department, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)), the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), and JPAC are involved to establish strategic relationships and negotiate access with other nations. Once completed, JPAC works with the appropriate Combatant Command (COCOM) and defense attaché from a Country Team to initiate technical talks with that nation. Other early steps in the process include research and analysis (R&A) of case files and incidents that are essential to the development of an identification package. DPMO and JPAC analysts compile case files that include: basic information pertaining to missing persons; historical background; military medical and personnel records; unit histories; official correspondence; maps; photographs; intelligence reporting; and, post-incident reporting such as subsequent sightings, eyewitness accounts, and hearsay from returned POWs and indigenous people.

Subsequently, researchers present their analyses to an Investigation Decision Board (IDB) for approval to proceed with a field investigation. While in-country, investigation teams conduct witness interviews and site analysis. If a site is considered a good candidate for recovery, it is presented for review to an Excavation Decision Board (EDB), which hears the results of the field investigation and determines whether or not to approve the site for excavation. If approved, a recovery team of ten to fourteen people,

¹ This number is accurate as of the date of this report. Additional research and refinement of cases of unaccounted-for service members from WWII will likely change this number.

led by a forensic anthropologist, is activated for excavation. Additional labor is hired locally to supplement the team in digging and sifting operations. If biological or non-biological evidence is found, the recovery team sends it to the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) for accession. It is important to note that each accession pertains to an event (i.e., field work or turnover) and, therefore, may not always include evidence or directly correlate with a single individual.

Once an accession is logged into the CIL, a series of analyses commences, including dental, skeletal, DNA, and non-biological analyses. The CIL performs analyses of skeletal and dental remains along with non-biological analyses. If DNA analysis is required, the CIL sends samples to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL), which conducts DNA analysis, primarily mitochondrial. If life science equipment analysis is necessary, then the CIL either sends the non-biological evidence to the Life Science Equipment Laboratory (LSEL), or retains it for analysis within the CIL. In current practice, SEA cases are sent to the LSEL, while most cases from other conflicts are retained in the CIL. Typically, after the CIL Director receives reports from AFDIL and LSEL, the Director certifies an identification. Subsequently, an identification packet is sent to the Service Casualty Office (SCO) for presentation to the families.

Accessions and IDs by Source and Conflict. During each of the last ten years, JPAC has averaged 150 accessions with any evidence, sixty accessions with possible U.S. human remains, and seventy-four identifications. Evidence is accessed into the CIL through one of three methods: a joint recovery; a unilateral turnover; or a disinterment. A joint recovery is an accession obtained during a JPAC joint field activity; a unilateral turnover is an accession provided by an external party, which could be a private citizen, a non-governmental organization (NGO), or a foreign government; and a disinterment is an accession of remains that are exhumed for the purposes of identification.

Figure ES-1 shows the number of accessions with any evidence (i.e., biological or non-biological) by source and conflict, and the number of identifications completed during each of the last ten years. Figure ES-1 illustrates two key points. First, the number of annual accessions from joint recoveries decreased and the number of accessions from disinterments increased during the last ten years. Second, accessions from SEA declined in recent years as recoveries in SEA became more difficult and as more effort shifted to WWII and the Korean Wars. This is a significant shift, as historically SEA represented the majority of accessions, averaging 60 percent of accessions during the last ten years. These trends will continue if unidentified remains in the Punchbowl, such as those from the USS Oklahoma, are disinterred.

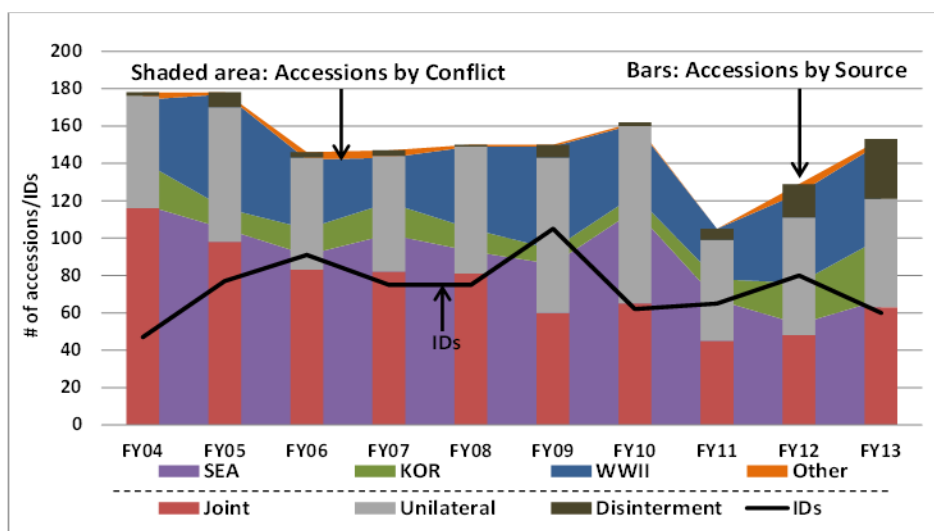


Figure ES-1. Accessions by Source and Conflict

Family Member Updates (FMU) and Participation. Family outreach is an important part of the community’s mission. Family outreach events “are designed to keep family members informed of the U.S. government’s worldwide mission to account for those still missing and to discuss in detail the latest information available about their specific cases.”² These events also assist in the collection of family reference samples to support DNA analyses. During the last five years, DoD has, on average, collected more than 200 DNA samples annually from family outreach events.

In FY 2013, DoD conducted: seven Family Member Update (FMU) events held in the continental United States (CONUS); an SEA annual conference; and a Korea/Cold War (KCW) annual conference. Figure ES-2 shows family member attendance at update events since FY 1995. Korea and Cold War family members have constituted the largest attendance at FMUs and their respective annual conferences for years. WWII family member attendance has increased during the last ten years while attendance of SEA families has decreased.

² Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/family_events/.

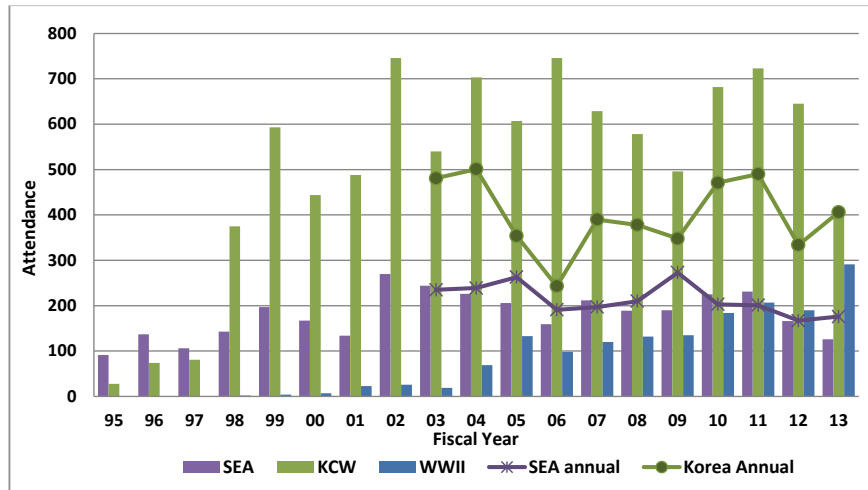


Figure ES-2. Family Member Update Attendance

Organizational Structure. As indicated above, the past conflict accounting mission is conducted by multiple organizations in DoD including DPMO, JPAC, AFDIL, LSEL, and the SCOs. Appendix E shows the current organizational structure of the Accounting Community and how each organization reports through a different chain of command. This highly distributed structure, coupled with the absence of a single, accountable individual to lead the accounting effort, has resulted in duplication of effort among organizations, inefficiencies, and institutional conflict. Specific areas of duplication and decentralization include support staff, external communications, R&A, life science analysis, policy, plans, negotiations, and contracting for genealogical histories (Appendix F). There are also numerous institutional conflicts within and among organizations in the community that have led to mistrust, dysfunction, and unproductive behavior by individuals.

The CAPE team weighed the pros and cons of multiple organizational options, including restructuring, for each of the components of the community. In addition to examining the pros and cons of a unified DPMO and JPAC organization (see Appendix H), the team considered institutional leadership options for a new organization (e.g., Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant or Combatant Commander), and management arrangement options that would improve efficiency and mission focus (e.g., Defense Agency, Field Activity, and others).

Recommendation. We recommend unification of DPMO and JPAC into a single Defense Agency with a new name. The new organization should report to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and be civilian-led with a 2-star military deputy. Other agencies in the community may remain in their existing organizational structures for now. While these other agencies perform duties in addition to supporting the past conflict accounting mission, they would accept tasking and case prioritization from the director of the new agency for their past conflict accounting mission. Appendix I illustrates the proposed organizational structure.

The new agency must be appropriately resourced and supported by DoD to handle all legal, contracting, and operational support issues that may arise during the conduct of the personnel accounting mission. This is particularly important because, under the proposed organizational structure, the new agency will not report through a geographic combatant command, which would provide all of these services to a subordinate component.

Business Processes. We found that a number of legal issues have arisen concerning the movement of remains from Europe to the United States and also involving the interstate transfer of remains within the United States. These issues could arise more frequently in the future because of recent changes that the Department has instituted regarding the handling of remains within the DoD mortuary system. We also observe that the protocols for handling deaths from current conflicts differ markedly from those used for handling of remains from prior conflicts. In addition, we found that there are areas of duplication between the CIL and other parts of the community in the areas of R&A and life science equipment analysis.

Recommendation. We recommend that a Medical Examiner (ME) be included in the identification process and be the DoD authority for establishing a formal identification. While the statutory provisions applicable to past conflict personnel accounting involving forensic pathologists (i.e., 10 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) §1507) and forensic pathology investigations by medical examiners (i.e., 10 U.S.C. §1471) do not require that all identifications be made by a medical examiner, incorporating an ME into the process would address legal issues that have arisen concerning the movement of remains from Europe to the United States and the interstate transfer of remains within the United States. This change would also create consistency between DoD processes in place for past conflict deaths with those for current deaths.

We also recommend re-scoping the activities of the CIL to focus solely on skeletal and dental remains. Implementation of this change would reduce redundancies, capitalize on specialization, and refine division of labor. An illustration of how reports supporting the identification process could flow through a new organization is included in Appendix J.

Metrics. The FY 2010 NDAA directs DoD to have the capability and capacity to account for 200 missing personnel per year beginning in FY 2015. As noted above, DoD accounted for sixty personnel in FY 2013. We assess that the Department is unlikely to achieve the 200 annual ID goal on a sustained basis.

The metric of 200 identifications per year presents numerous challenges and associated unintended consequences. First and foremost, it incentivizes the Accounting Community to seek easier cases, which would result in a change in the prioritization that JPAC currently uses for its recovery of remains. This in turn would likely lead to an increase in disinterment and recovery missions that yield a higher probability of success and yield higher numbers of remains. It would also decrease the investigative and recovery missions performed in SEA, and increase such missions for WWII and Korea. Second, the fact that only new identifications officially “count” toward the statutory

metric ignores a significant level of effort made by both the CIL and AFDIL in identifying additional remains of individuals that may have already been identified. Such efforts are fundamentally necessary, especially for cases involving co-mingled remains. Yet the results of these activities are not currently reflected in the statutory identification metric. Finally, a focus on the number of annual identifications as the only metric is too limited to reflect the output of the Accounting Community accurately. It fails to consider the full range of efforts of the Accounting Community, such as informing relatives about the fate of their family member(s). These efforts remain largely underappreciated due to a lack of consistent reporting to the public and Congress on these activities.

Recommendation. Implement a broad set of metrics, reflecting the full range of effort initiated and executed by the DoD Accounting Community. A list of possible metrics for consideration to be included for reporting purposes is provided in Appendices K and L.

Additional Improvements. DoD must improve transparency and reporting to the families, the public, and Congress on this important mission. Most importantly, DoD must improve public awareness that as many as half of the unaccounted-for personnel might never be recovered. Also, the community needs to categorize cases for all conflicts (i.e., active, delayed, or no further pursuit), and inform family members of the status.

Several members of Congress believe that an improved level of transparency is necessary in this mission area. For example, Senators Claire C. McCaskill and Kelly A. Ayotte's January 10, 2014 letter to the Secretary of Defense states, "It is time that families are given honest answers about the chances of their loved ones being found, identified, and brought home." Also, the FY 2014 NDAA requires the DoD to report to Congress on the number of missing persons considered unrecoverable.

We also identified a number of improvements for each of the Accounting Community organizations that were included in this review. These changes should be implemented to improve business practices and mission effectiveness throughout the Community. A summary of these recommendations is provided in Appendix M.

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1. Introduction

A. Background of the Accounting Mission

The Department of Defense (DoD) has always placed a high priority on returning fallen service members. The mission of returning fallen service members from past conflicts is the responsibility of several organizations that make up the Personnel Accounting Community. Their number one objective is to return live Americans. However, no live, missing in action (MIA) service members have returned since “Operation Homecoming” in 1973. The community has, however, returned and accounted for hundreds of fallen service members.

At the end of every conflict since World War II (WWII), the Department made substantial efforts to account for the fallen. At the end of WWII, the Department recovered more than 280,000 fallen Americans from crash sites, battlefields, and temporary gravesites.³ Following the ceasefire of the Korean War in 1954, North Korea returned 3,000 remains and the Department recovered thousands more.⁴ At the end of the Cold War, 126 American service members remained unaccounted-for.⁵ At the end of the Vietnam War, 591 prisoners of war (POW) were returned to the United States in “Operation Homecoming.” Search and recovery of missing persons was challenging because of the limited access, and in 1975, all recovery operations were suspended due to the political climate.⁶

During the period that recovery operations in Vietnam were suspended, most recoveries were conducted on a reactionary basis. For example, if a farmer came across artifacts or remains that were believed to be American while plowing a field, then the Department would send a team to repatriate the remains. In the late-1980s, when Vietnam permitted the United States back in the country, the Department resumed actively searching for and recovering remains. In 1992, the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) was established to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing from the Vietnam War.⁷ Since then, the mission has expanded from the Vietnam War to include other conflicts. In 1994, Congress mandated that DoD provide information to families of missing persons from the Korean War and the Cold

³ DPMO, <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/wwii/>.

⁴ DPMO, <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/korea/>.

⁵ DPMO, http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/cold_war/.

⁶ DPMO, <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/vietnam/>.

⁷ Department of Air Force,
http://www.15wing.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=5111&page=1.

War.⁸ In 1999, the mission expanded to include WWII aircraft losses in the Pacific theater, and in 2009, the mission expanded again to include all WWII and Persian Gulf losses.⁹

In 1993, the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office was established to have policy, control, and oversight of the Accounting Community.¹⁰ In addition, in 2003, the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CIL-HI) and JTF-FA merged, resulting in the creation of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC). JPAC's mission is to conduct global search, recovery, and laboratory operations to identify unaccounted-for Americans.¹¹

Even with the considerable efforts to repatriate service members after conflicts, there are still more than 83,000 personnel from past conflicts listed as missing (see Table 1 below).¹² In addition, the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directed DoD to have the capability and capacity to account for 200 missing persons per year beginning in FY 2015. In response, DoD added 253 positions and more than \$300 million (M) during the preparation of the FY 2012–2016 President's Budget Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) to JPAC. Currently, the U.S. government expends approximately \$190 million per year and employs more than 750 people on this mission. In FY 2013, the Accounting Community identified sixty unaccounted-for personnel.

Table 1. Number of Unaccounted-for Missing Persons, by Conflict

WWII	Korean	Cold War	Vietnam	Iraq/Others	Total
73,637	7,891	126	1,643	6	83,303

Note: as of 2/20/2014

⁸ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, Pub. L. 103-337, § 1031 (1994).

⁹ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-65, § 576 (1999); National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-84, §541(2009)

¹⁰ DPMO, http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/about_us/.

¹¹ Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), http://www.jpac.pacom.mil/index.php?page=mission_overview&size=100&ind=0.

¹² DPMO, http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/summary_statistics/.

B. Motivation for Study

In July 2013, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report entitled “Top-Level Leadership Attention Needed to Resolve Longstanding Challenges in Accounting for Missing Persons from Past Conflicts.”¹³ The report states that a fragmented organizational structure undermines DoD’s capability and capacity to accomplish its missing persons accounting mission. In response, DoD agreed to consider options for reorganizing the Accounting Community.

There has been substantial Congressional interest in this mission since the GAO report was released. In August 2013, the Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs held a hearing entitled “Mismanagement of the POW/MIA Accounting.” Senators Claire C. McCaskill and Kelly A. Ayotte’s statements highlighted their concern over dysfunctional relationships within the community.¹⁴ Committees from both the House and Senate have sent multiple letters to the Secretary of Defense in the last six months stressing concerns about the Accounting Community mission. In addition, the FY 2014 NDAA (Section 581) directs the Department to submit a report about the POW/MIA Accounting Community no later than June 2014, which includes an assessment of the feasibility and advisability of reorganizing the community into a single, central command.

On August 26, 2013, Deputy Secretary Carter tasked CAPE to assess the organizational structure, processes, and metrics of the DoD Personnel Accounting Community (Appendix B). Specifically, CAPE was tasked to: determine how the various components of the personnel accounting community support the identification process; assess the current structure of the Personnel Accounting Community and determine if the structure is effective and cost-efficient; evaluate whether or not the “200 accounted-for goal” is the optimal metric; and provide recommendations for alternative organizational structures and processes to conduct this mission effectively. This report is structured to address these four issues.

¹³ Government Accountability Office (GAO), “DoD’s POW/MIA Mission: Top-Level Leadership Attention Needed to Resolve Longstanding Challenges in Accounting for Missing Persons from Past Conflicts,” GAO-13-619 (Washington, DC: GAO July 2013).

¹⁴ U.S. Senate, “Mismanagement of POW/MIA Accounting,” August 1, 2013, <http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/fco/hearings/mismanagement-of-pow/mia-accounting>.

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2. Understanding the Mission

A. Past Conflict Accounting Mission Organizations

This section addresses the second directive of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DSD) tasking:

- Determine how the various components of the personnel accounting community support the identification process.

The past conflict accounting mission is conducted by multiple organizations in DoD. Appendix E shows the current organizational structure of the Accounting Community. Notice how each organization reports through a different chain of command.

1. Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Accounting Command (JPAC)

JPAC is the main operational element in the Accounting Community. Its mission is to investigate, conduct recovery operations, and identify remains of unaccounted-for Americans lost in previous conflicts. JPAC was established on October 1, 2003 from the merger of the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CIL-HI) and Joint Task Force—Full Accounting (JTF-FA),¹⁵ and is a Direct Reporting Unit to Pacific Command (PACOM). It is headquartered on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam where it houses the traditional elements of a military command (J1-J8) and the laboratory, officially known as the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL). A JPAC continental United States (CONUS) Annex (JCA), located on Offutt Air Force Base (AFB), was established in June 2013 to accommodate the additional laboratory space required to achieve the “200-accounted-for-annually” goal. In addition, JPAC maintains three permanent overseas detachments in Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi, Vietnam; and Vientiane, Laos to assist with logistics and in-country support during investigation and recovery operations. It has a forward-deployed staff in Stuttgart, Germany, and sustains a rotational investigative team in Seoul, South Korea. In FY 2013, JPAC executed about \$90 million budget and had 543 assigned personnel.¹⁶

¹⁵ The U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CIL-HI) was established in 1976 to search for, recover, and identify missing personnel from all previous conflicts. The Joint Task Force—Full Accounting (JTF-FA) was created in 1992 for the fullest possible accounting of personnel from the Vietnam War.

¹⁶ Data provided by Pacific Command (PACOM) and JPAC Comptrollers during JPAC visit (Appendix G).

2. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs (DASD(POW/MPA)) and the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)

The DASD(POW/MPA) reports to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and is responsible for exercising policy, control, and oversight for the entire process of accounting for missing persons from past and current operations; advocating for program funding requirements; and leading the government's public outreach program on missing person matters. The DASD(POW/MPA) is "dual-hatted" as the Director of DPMO, the field activity that: leads the Accounting Community; promulgates personnel accounting and recovery policy; supports the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC); and serves as DoD's representative for the accounting mission.¹⁷ DPMO renders final analytic judgments on assessing the fullest possible accounting in cases by identifying possibilities for future action and determining when further investigation may be deferred pending new information, or when further pursuit may not recover remains. With a budget of \$20M in FY 2013, DPMO derives its authorities from U.S. Code (U.S.C.) Title 10, Subtitle A, Part II, Chapter 76 §1501-1513, and DoD Directive (DoDD) 5110.10 (21 September 2005).

3. Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL)

AFDIL performs DNA testing to identify human remains from peacetime casualties and from current *and* prior conflicts.¹⁸ The Past Conflict Personnel Accounting Section of AFDIL works primarily in support of JPAC.¹⁹ It receives bone samples of remains recovered or otherwise acquired by JPAC and cut by the CIL to conduct DNA analyses. AFDIL compares DNA sequences from bone samples with DNA reference samples provided by family members to determine if there is a match—the CIL then uses the information for a personnel identification (or for exclusionary purposes). AFDIL is a component of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES). AFDIL's budget in FY 2013 for the accounting mission is \$11M. Its activities are articulated in DOD Instruction (DoDI) 5424.30.

4. Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL)

LSEL, which is part of the Air Force Materiel Command, is located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB) and provides scientific analysis of aircraft and military life support equipment. Its mission is fourfold and includes functions beyond the past conflict accounting mission, providing: 1) assistance to the Aircraft Mishap

¹⁷ December 11, 2009 Memo to MilDepts et al., titled "Accounting for Missing Persons in Conflicts, WWII to Desert Storm" contained in file named Packet to Expand Resources for Missing Persons Community (OSD CAPE - May 2010).

¹⁸ DoDI 5154.30, "Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Operations," Enclosure 2, paragraph E.2.6. This is currently under revision to update organizational changes associated with base realignment and closure (BRAC) (i.e., dissolution of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP)).

¹⁹ Other sections support a number of customers, including the AFME for current-day conflicts, and other government agencies including the State Department, National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Investigative Board; 2) technical training to personnel in aircraft life sciences equipment investigations; 3) technical and scientific support on life sciences equipment; and 4) support to the “National Accountability Mission.”²⁰ For the latter, it analyzes aircraft, military equipment, and other life science equipment-related artifacts recovered by JPAC at loss sites to support the identification process. LSEL’s budget for the accounting mission was \$0.2M in FY 2013.

5. Service Casualty Offices (SCOs)

Each Military Department has a casualty office that acts as the primary interlocutor between the government and the families of unaccounted-for service members. Their primary mission is to collect, assess, integrate, and distribute to the next of kin (NoK).²¹ They maintain contact with family members through phone calls, written correspondence, and in-person at Family Member Updates (FMUs) and annual government briefings. They are also responsible for implementing legislation and POW repatriation plans, maintaining case records for unaccounted-for service members, and conducting POW/MIA awareness programs.²² The SCOs also provide casualty notification and assistance for families of service members for current deaths.

SCOs also manage genealogical research and conduct outreach programs to seek out and locate new family members that are closely related to the missing service member (i.e., NoK). Once in contact with the NoK, they facilitate DNA reference sample collection. Also, SCOs coordinate responses to family inquiries and concerns, and brief families with an identification package when a service member is identified. The SCOs vary in terms of size due to the different numbers of missing service members from each branch.

6. Pacific Command (PACOM)

JPAC is a Direct Reporting Unit (DRU) to PACOM, which supports the accounting mission by providing Service Component resources at the expense of the provider. This includes resources such as Individual Augmentees (IAs), airlift, and staff support for functions such as legal and facilities. PACOM also provides interagency coordination by the PACOM staff, and the advocacy of a Combatant Commander.²³ PACOM supports Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) negotiations with foreign governments in its area of responsibility (AOR), as requested by the DASD(POW/MPA).

²⁰ DPMO, Department of Defense Supporting Organizations, http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/dna_information/supporting_organizations/.

²¹ The report references the primary next of kin (PNoK) and the next of kin (NoK). The NoK can include primary and secondary. The PNoK makes official rulings for the case, i.e. acceptance of an identification, but DNA sample collection can be initiated with the primary or secondary next of kin.

²² Past Conflict Repatriations Branch (PCRB) Mission Statement, [https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Past Conflict Repatriations Branch PCRB Mission Statement/](https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Past%20Conflict%20Repatriations%20Branch%20PCRB%20Mission%20Statement/).

²³ Memo from Chief of Staff (COS), USPACOM to U.S. GAO, subject “PACOM response to U.S. GAO questionnaire of views on organizational options regarding accounting for missing persons and related questions,” March 4, 2013.

7. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P))

USD(P) is currently the Principal Staff Assistant (PSA) to whom DPMO reports and is responsible for developing, coordinating, and overseeing the implementation of DoD policy to account for personnel unaccounted for as a result of hostile acts.

8. Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES)

AFMES provides DoD and other Federal agencies with comprehensive medico-legal death investigations, including determining the cause and manner of death and identifying the decedent. AFMES serves as the DoD scientific authority on the identification of remains of DoD-affiliated personnel for current deaths, and for other deceased individuals for whom a death certificate has not been issued.²⁴

9. Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R))

USD(P&R) coordinates casualty matters among the Military Services (hereafter called ‘Services’), other Federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and family support groups. In addition, this organization provides policy guidance to the Services and other agencies on casualty reporting, recording, notification, and legislation affecting casualty matters, and develops issuances on mortuary affairs. In addition, this organization develops policy regarding personnel recovery in DoD component education and training programs.

10. Family and Veterans Organizations

Family and Veterans organizations are key stakeholders in the Accounting Community. These non-profit organizations comprise members seeking information on the fate of their unaccounted-for family members. The leadership of these organizations interacts regularly with DPMO, and sometimes with other Accounting Community organizations, and serves as advocates for the accounting mission. The organizations vary in terms of size, influence, and the conflict with which they are associated.

²⁴ DoDD 1300.22E, “Mortuary Affairs Policy,” Enclosure 2.

B. Resources: Funding and Manpower

Appendix G presents data on the resources allocated to each organization in the Accounting Community, for the purpose of past accounting, in FY 2013. It includes direct and indirect costs.²⁵ DoD spends about \$190 million dollars annually on accounting for missing personnel from past conflicts. About 46 percent of the direct resources are allocated to operations, including investigations and recovery missions.

In FY 2013, DoD allocated more than 750 personnel to the accounting mission. More than 75 percent of the personnel working on past conflict accounting are concentrated at DPMO and JPAC. It is CAPE's assessment that the Accounting Community can achieve better results with the current level of resources devoted to this mission.

C. Challenges by Conflict

Each conflict presents a different set of challenges for recovering remains. In Southeast Asia (SEA), recovery missions have been conducted since the 1980s. Many remaining sites are either in locations that are dangerous to access, or sites that have already been excavated—some more than once. The weather also plays an important role in recovery missions in SEA, limiting the window for recoveries to six months in some regions. Climate and soil conditions in SEA make finding remains increasingly unlikely and, when found, remains can be too diminutive to enable adequate DNA testing. Also, political access may be a challenge in SEA, particularly in Central Vietnam where access to provinces is controlled at the local level by provincial governments that are not always receptive to operations.

Korean War losses pose a different set of challenges. These losses are distributed in three different locations: North Korea, South Korea, and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, commonly referred to as the "Punchbowl." In North Korea, where approximately 5,300 of the roughly 7,900 total missing are located, access is part of a much larger political issue. If or when access is granted, JPAC would likely have limited freedom of movement and strict monitoring. In South Korea, rapid urbanization during the last few decades has resulted in construction of infrastructure, including roads, residences, and large commercial buildings, on land that contains the remains of lost American service members. Also, about one-third of American missing from the Korean War that are considered recoverable are buried as unknowns in the Punchbowl. Conducting DNA analysis on remains in the Punchbowl is difficult due to the use of formaldehyde for preservation during the burial process. The CIL has recently developed new techniques to identify these remains using chest radiographs in addition to DNA.

²⁵ These costs do not include the cost to disinter at American cemeteries, which is borne by the cemeteries as part of their operating costs.

In the 1990s, North Korea turned over what was thought to be the remains of 208 service members. These remains, combined with remains from North Korean field operations during the same time period, are known as the “K208.” These remains have been difficult to identify because they are highly comingled, and they require intensive DNA sampling and analysis. Until 2009, when the CIL expanded into Building 220 on Pearl Harbor, the CIL lacked adequate laboratory table space to sort the remains of K208. It also did not have adequate DNA samples from relatives, referred to as “family reference samples” (FRSs), to make identifications. By 2014, these issues had been addressed, and the CIL expects to identify nearly all of the K208 remains within the next five years.²⁶

For World War II losses, a key issue involves how to categorize and prioritize the massive number of losses. Approximately 40,000 World War II losses are presumed to be under water and will never be recovered. Unlike the SEA conflict, for which “No Further Pursuit” is used to describe such cases, the Accounting Community has not established a method for categorizing World War II losses and establishing a more realistic number of recoverable losses. Because these losses are still officially listed as MIA, and there is a public expectation that everyone on the MIA list will be pursued, there can be a misperception that these cases are currently active or that they will someday become active.

Expanding operations into new AORs, such as European nations, where about a third of WWII losses are located, has been more difficult than expected. Most European countries have strict rules regarding handling of human remains, significant bureaucracies at both state and municipal levels, and procedural requirements such as the need for permits.

A standardized process for disinterment of WWII losses has only been established recently. Disinterments have the potential to play a more prominent role in identifying WWII losses because more than 8,000 service members from WWII are buried as unknowns around the world. These unknowns derive from all the major battles and engagements of the war. The connections between these burials and current field work as well as current and past identification dictate a meticulous research program and a standardized process for moving forward on a disinterment.

Finally, DoD only has FRSs for 3 percent of WWII cases, compared to 88 percent for Korea, and 80 percent for SEA. Given the number of individuals missing and the difficulty of finding living relatives, the SCOs’ approach to FRS collection for WWII has been on a “by-request” basis. In other words, FRSs are requested for a pool of individuals for a given case, unlike the Korean War or SEA conflicts where SCOs seek an FRS for every missing service member, regardless of the status of their case.

²⁶ The Accounting Community now has FRS samples for 88 percent of the Korean War missing, compared to 63 percent in 2008.

D. Process of Accounting for Missing Personnel

1. Establish Strategic Relationships and Negotiate Access

To conduct recovery operations in a foreign country, access must first be negotiated. These high-level discussions are typically led by the State Department, OUSD(P), and DPMO with inputs from JPAC to ensure that operational and technical requirements are part of the conversation. Close coordination among the interagency is particularly important in cases for which relations with the other nation are sensitive.

Once access is negotiated, JPAC works with the appropriate COCOM and defense attaché from the Country Team to initiate technical talks with that nation. These talks cover land and labor compensation rates, identify applicable laws and regulations, and ensure the safety and security of personnel conducting remains recovery operations. Historically, PACOM has been the primary COCOM affected by JPAC activities. As World War II sites continue to be identified in Europe, however, it has become increasingly common for the JPAC J5 to engage with the European Command (EUCOM). Normally, JPAC leads technical talks with foreign counterparts, and PACOM provides support or intervention when necessary.

For all countries, there is an informal understanding that DPMO leads preliminary access negotiations while JPAC leads subsequent technical talks. There are, however, no documented, delineated criteria stating how these discussions should be coordinated. At times, this has prompted disagreements between DPMO and JPAC concerning the organization to take the lead, and under what circumstances.

2. Research and Analysis (R&A)

R&A is a complex function with numerous opportunities to pursue different research strategies and methodologies. Both DPMO and JPAC have developed their own R&A capabilities and methods that differ significantly from each other. Some of these differences are by design; others are the result of each organization's pursuit of different goals.

In DPMO, the Operations Directorate houses all R&A efforts, which are organized by conflict.²⁷ DPMO research analysts compile and maintain comprehensive case files related to personnel accounting. They conduct research at archival facilities in the National Capital Region (NCR), St. Louis, Missouri, Moscow, and China. DPMO provides researchers, analysts, and other support, as necessary, to the USRJC on POW/MIA.

In JPAC, the Research and Analysis Directorate, J2, is also organized by conflict. Its duties are generally to prepare historical reports to support the Investigation Decision

²⁷ Formerly called the Research and Analysis Directorate prior to reorganization in early 2013.

Board (IDB) and the Excavation Decision Board (EDB) processes, or to respond to requests from the CIL following a successful recovery operation. For example, J2 analysts compile the historical documentation that correlates a specific site recovery with a specific incident. In doing so, they provide a “short list” to the CIL of the personnel whose remains may have been recovered. This input corroborates the “historical feasibility” of the CIL’s ID—that it is reasonable for the remains of the suspected individual to have been found in the location. Similarly, requirements for historical information on individuals whose remains are obtained through disinterment, or from a unilateral turnover, are generated in the CIL. To support a large number of these cases, the CIL has created a distinct research cell dedicated solely to disinterment of remains from the Punchbowl. The division of duties between the two organizations, by conflict, has evolved over time. JPAC’s World War II analysts focus on Pacific theater losses and European losses in Germany and Austria. Their counterparts in DPMO focus on France, Italy, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union, where they have devoted resources to in-country investigations. DPMO’s World War II section is also responsible for building case files, scanning individual deceased personnel files (IDPFs), and categorizing the list of missing service members. The FY 2010 NDAA requires DoD to establish a personnel case file for each missing person.

JPAC’s Northeast Asia (NEA) Division has had to modify its approach to respond to two major challenges. First, the preponderance of NEA losses are in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), with obvious associated political difficulties. Second, the rapid urbanization of South Korea and its aging population are making operations there increasingly difficult. In an effort to increase leads in Korea, JPAC established a Korean Forward Element (KFE) in Seoul, which has succeeded in producing approximately thirty leads per year. DPMO’s NEA analysts perform archival research and obtain oral histories from witness interviews, and work in Russian archives.

SEA analysts at DPMO and JPAC collaborate effectively, but not efficiently. Currently, duplication is deconflicted at the Division Chief and action officer levels via direct communications, shared databases, and spreadsheets. DPMO also leads a case review process that develops courses of action to move unresolved cases toward the fullest possible accounting of the missing individual. These case reviews began with Vietnam losses and are now conducted bi-annually for both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

3. Investigations

After correlating all available information to identify a potential loss or burial site, J2 analysts prepare historical reports that are presented to an IDB, which votes to determine if a site is to be added to the Investigation Team (IT) list.

An IT usually consists of four to fifteen people including a team leader, analyst, communications technician, and medic. In some instances, an anthropologist, explosive ordnance disposal technician, forensic photographer, linguist, and life support technician may augment the team. This has been the standard composition of a team, drawn from SEA experience, but not all of these skills are needed in many European locations.

Historically, the only element of DPMO that performed field investigations was the Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD), due to its unique mission in working with Russia. In response to NDAA 2010, however, in which Congress added World War II losses to the accounting mission, DPMO's Operations Directorate began conducting field investigations of World War II sites in France, Italy, and Eastern Europe. This expansion of DPMO's operational duties was a solution offered by DPMO to investigate the large number of World War II sites, that would enable the community to reach the 200 accounted-for goal directed in NDAA 2010, but that JPAC would not be likely to visit.

4. Operational Planning and Recovery

The EDB convenes to hear the results of field investigations and to determine whether or not a site is approved for inclusion on the Master Excavation List (MEL). It is current policy that, if it has been more than five years since an IT visited a site, another IT visit is required before the site is excavated.

The prioritization of recovery sites is a contentious issue due to competing interests among family groups and other external pressures. The Decision Matrix (DECMAT), constructed by JPAC, is the biggest single decision support tool to prioritize cases that are added to the MEL. Several factors, ranging from the long-term viability of a site to external interest, each weighted differently, are scored to determine a site's ranking on the MEL.²⁸ JPAC's J3 uses the MEL, together with inputs from the Commander of JPAC and from DPMO, to draft its Operations Plan. The J3 states that its single greatest challenge is adapting its Operations Plan to accommodate unscheduled recoveries known as "pop-ups."²⁹ JPAC must also be prepared to conduct recoveries in North Korea should political circumstances allow, although these operations have been cancelled in recent years.

When preparing to excavate a site, a recovery team (RT) is activated. A RT typically has ten to fourteen people and is led by a forensic anthropologist. The team normally includes linguists, medics, life support technicians, communications specialists, explosive ordnance disposal technicians, a forensic photographer, and a mortuary affairs specialist. Additional (manual) labor is hired locally to supplement the RT, to help in actual digging and sifting operations, for example. A standard recovery mission lasts thirty-five to sixty days. JPAC uses its own organic assets as well as resources provided at the direction of PACOM, including military augmentees and C-17 air lift capabilities.

Remains are delivered to JPAC's CIL and logged in as "accessions." It is important to note that accessions pertain to an event and may represent more than a single

²⁸ Factors include: whether a site is in jeopardy; whether a site is open or closed; whether previous remains from the same individual(s) are in the lab or already identified; the number of possible individuals; basis for the correlation of the site (i.e., correlated based on evidence at the site; on analysis; or both); and external interest.

²⁹ Pop-ups may occur for several reasons, including DPMO field investigations that find surface remains (thus requiring JPAC to cancel another Joint Field Activity (JFA) to excavate the higher priority site) or unplanned missions when remains are in imminent danger of being lost or destroyed.

individual.³⁰ Evidence is accessioned into the CIL through one of three methods: a joint recovery; a unilateral turnover; and a disinterment. A joint recovery is an accession obtained during a recovery mission, outlined above; a unilateral turnover is an accession provided by an external party, which could be a private citizen, a non-governmental organization (NGO), or a foreign government; and a disinterment is an accession of remains that are exhumed for the purposes of identification.

Figure 1 below shows accessions from FY 2004 to FY 2013 from joint recoveries, unilateral turnovers, disinterments with any evidence, and those with possible U.S. human remains.³¹ During each of the last ten years, JPAC has averaged 150 accessions with any evidence including osseous, non-osseous, dental, material evidence, or life support materials. In the same period, JPAC has averaged sixty accessions with possible U.S. human remains annually. Accessions from joint recoveries represent about half of all accessions since 2004. Accessions from recoveries, however, have been trending downward; they represented 40 percent of accessions in 2013. On average, about 40 percent of all accessions contain possible U.S. human remains, which must be used for identification. While joint recoveries yield possible U.S. human remains about 40 percent of the time, disinterments yield possible U.S. human remains nearly 100 percent of the time.

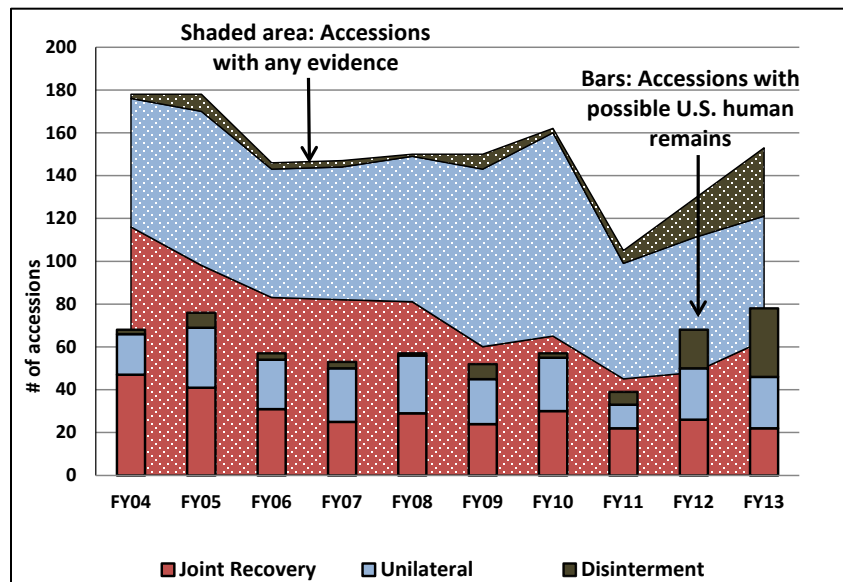


Figure 1. Accessions by Fiscal Year, Source, and Types of Evidence

Figure 2 below shows accessions with any evidence and those with possible U.S. human remains by conflict. SEA has historically accounted for the majority of accessions, averaging 60 percent of all accessions during the last ten years. SEA

³⁰ For instance, excavation of an aircraft or disinterment of a group grave could include remains from multiple individuals, but these would be entered as one accession. This is necessary because the lab cannot specify the number of individuals involved until analysis is conducted.

³¹ Data in this section were provided by JPAC on November 25, 2013, and January 10, 2014.

accessions have been declining and in FY 2013, they represented 44 percent of accessions with any evidence. The majority of accessions from SEA do not contain U.S. human remains. On average, 25 percent of accessions from SEA contain U.S. human remains, compared to 70 percent of accessions from Korea and 60 percent of accessions from WWII.³²

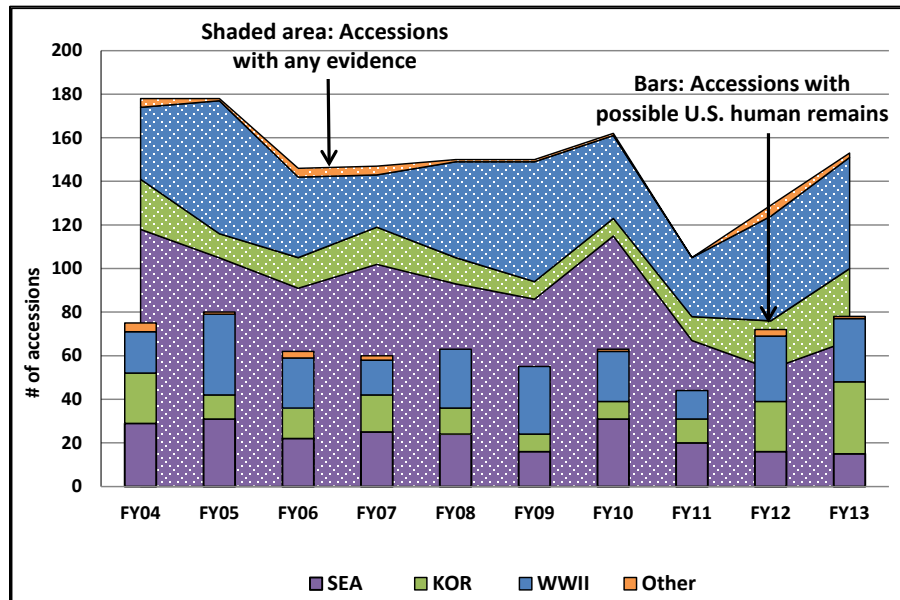


Figure 2. Accessions by Fiscal Year, Conflict, and Types of Evidence

On average, the costliest accessions are joint recoveries from SEA. Disinterments are less costly and have a higher probability of U.S. human remains than joint recoveries. Recovery operations in SEA are more costly than those from WWII or the Korean War, with a lower probability of recovering U.S. human remains. This results because of the difficulty of missions, harsh soil conditions, and some sites that have been previously excavated.

5. Identification of Remains

Once an accession is logged into the CIL, a series of analyses commences, including dental, skeletal, DNA, and non-biological analyses. Forensic anthropologists at the CIL sort the evidence and clean biological remains. They determine if the biological remains are human. If they are, the CIL begins reconstructing the biological profile. From the skeletal analysis, forensic anthropologists can determine age, gender, geographic ancestry, and height. This information can be critical to determining a short list of candidates, particularly for instances of ground losses. A forensic odontologist may

³² This data may be skewed due to the high percentage of disinterments, which have a higher probability of human remains, from the Korean War and WWII and the low percentage of disinterments from SEA. Based strictly on data from joint recoveries, however, SEA joint recoveries, on average, contain human remains in 30 percent of accessions, compared to 58 percent for the Korean War and 62 percent for WWII.

compare teeth to dental records of possible candidates. Also, the CIL recently developed a new technique for enabling identification through comparison of clavicle bones to chest radiographs.

If DNA analysis is required, DNA coordinators at the CIL determine the number of samples necessary and the sample locations. This recommendation takes into account the conditions under which the remains were obtained and the likelihood that they will yield a DNA sequence due to size and preservation. For example, unilateral turnovers, for which much less is typically known about the origin, co-mingled remains, and sites containing multiple losses may all have different DNA requirements.

If DNA analysis is required, a bone sample is cut and sent to AFDIL. At the same time, the DNA registry is checked for a likely FRS. If one is not present, it is requested from the appropriate SCO. AFDIL compares the DNA sequences of bone samples with the FRSs to determine if a match exists. The CIL then uses this information to make an identification, or uses it for exclusionary purposes.

In FY 2013, AFDIL sequenced 1,300 specimens and had an 88 percent success rate in obtaining DNA sequences from remains. Note that the remains received from this mission may be highly degraded and, in nearly every case, are decades old. This process—from the time of accession to the CIL until receipt of results from AFDIL—can last from three months to eighteen months.

If accessions contain material evidence, then this information is analyzed to support the identification process. Personal effects, such as watches and rings, are analyzed in the CIL. Life science equipment evidence, such as portions of ejection seats, uniforms, and helmets, is either analyzed at the CIL or sent to LSEL. If it is an SEA accession, then it is most likely sent to LSEL for analysis. For all other conflicts (and sometimes for SEA), the CIL conducts its own life science equipment analysis. This analysis helps to answer questions involving deployment of ejection seats, or the presence of the personnel in an aircraft when it went down.

Until 2013, LSEL mainly received cases if there were no human remains that could be forensically identified. On average, LSEL has received and analyzed about ten cases per year. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) between JPAC and the Agile Combat Support Directorate,³³ signed October 18, 2013, stipulates that all life science material evidence recovered on SEA losses will be sent to LSEL for analysis.³⁴ In anticipation of the signing of this agreement, the CIL delivered 186 sets of artifacts to LSEL in the span of three months during the summer of 2013. (Note that some of this material evidence entered the CIL as long as ten years ago.)

³³ LSEL is a subordinate organization to the Agile Combat Support Directorate.

³⁴ “MOA between the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and the Agile Combat Support Directorate, Air Force Life Cycle Management Center concerning Analysis of Life Science Equipment related to Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command Field Operations,” signed October 18, 2013, by the Commander, JPAC and the Director of Agile Combat Support.

The CIL Scientific Director uses input from the CIL, R&A, recovery teams, AFDIL, and LSEL to certify an identification of missing personnel.³⁵ Figure 3 shows the number of identifications made during the last ten years, by source and conflict.³⁶ Since its establishment in 2003, JPAC has averaged seventy-four identifications annually. There has been a general decline in identifications from the SEA conflict, for reasons previously explained, and an increase in Korean War identifications due to progress made on the K208. By source, joint recoveries are generally yielding fewer personnel identifications, while disinterment is producing more personnel identifications. Unilateral turnovers have accounted for an increasing number of identifications in recent years. This, again, is due to progress made on the K208 cases.

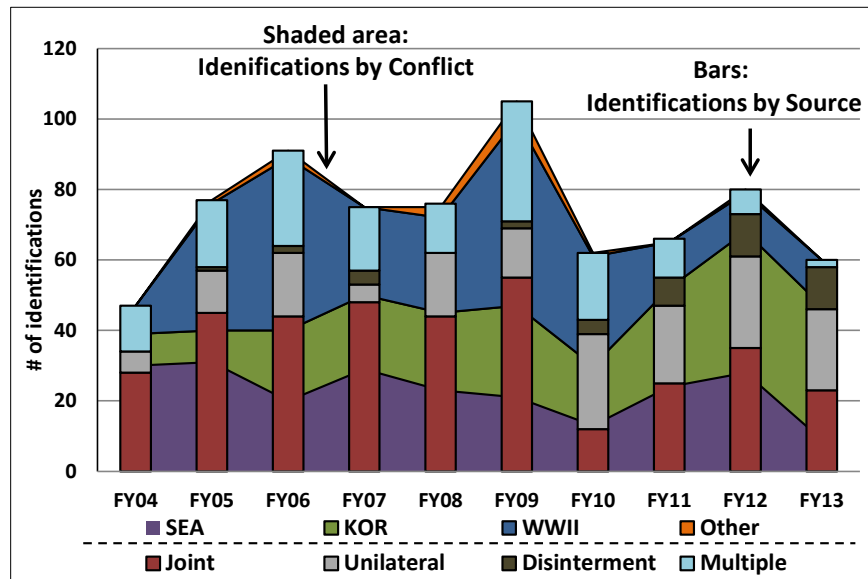


Figure 3. Identifications by Source and Conflict

Only new identifications “count” toward the statutory goal of 200 identifications per year. Identification of additional remains from individuals previously identified do not contribute to this goal. Such efforts are fundamentally necessary, especially for cases involving co-mingled remains.³⁷

The CIL has been criticized for the duration of the process required to identify missing personnel. Figure 4 below shows the length of time it has taken to make personnel identifications during the last ten years. The average time required is 6.8 years. The K208 cases, however, skew the results. Excluding the K208 cases, the average time

³⁵ Each identification must be supported by two pieces of evidence and at least one piece must be biological. For example, dental analysis may confirm the individual supported by material evidence (e.g., uniform, part of the aircraft or equipment).

³⁶ An identification where a substantial or diagnostic portion of the biological evidence was received from a combination of unilateral turnovers, joint recoveries, and disinterment is labeled ‘multiple’.

³⁷ Figure 3 does not include 207 identifications of additional remains from previously identified personnel during the last decade.

required is 5.1 years. Moreover, 25 percent of cases that have been identified were identified within one year of receipt.

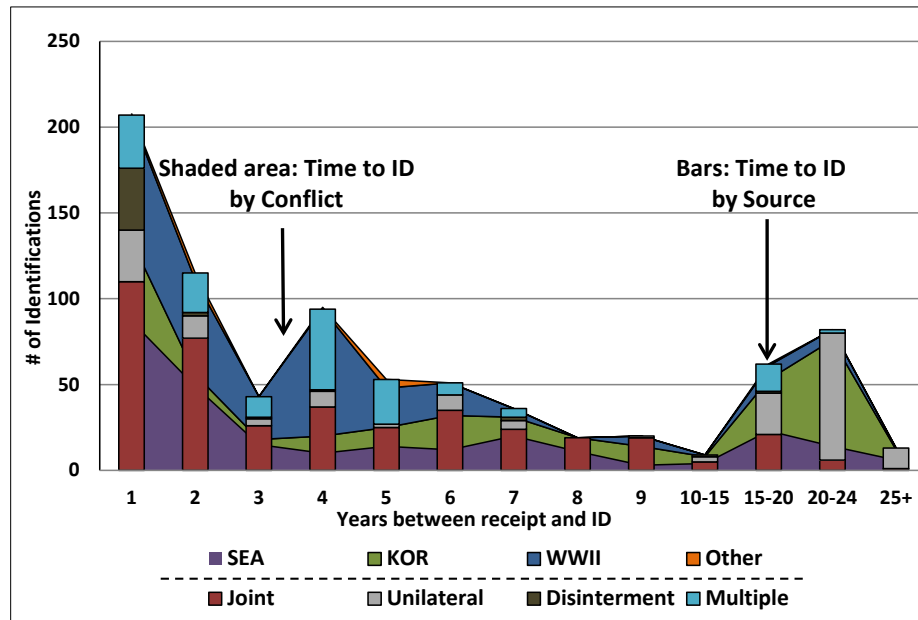


Figure 4. Time from Accession to Identification, by Source and Conflict

Figure 5 below illustrates the number of unidentified accessions, including possible biological evidence, that were in the custody of the CIL in January 2014 by the number of years since they were accessioned. Again, the anomalously high number of accessions in the lab for twenty years or more are predominately remains contained in the K208 cases. Otherwise, accessions that have been in the CIL for more than twenty years are mainly unilateral turnovers from SEA. Unilateral turnovers can be more difficult to identify due to the lack of circumstantial evidence. The increase in recent accessions from WWII is consistent with Congressional guidance to expand recovery operations to WWII aircraft losses in the Pacific in 1999, and later, worldwide.

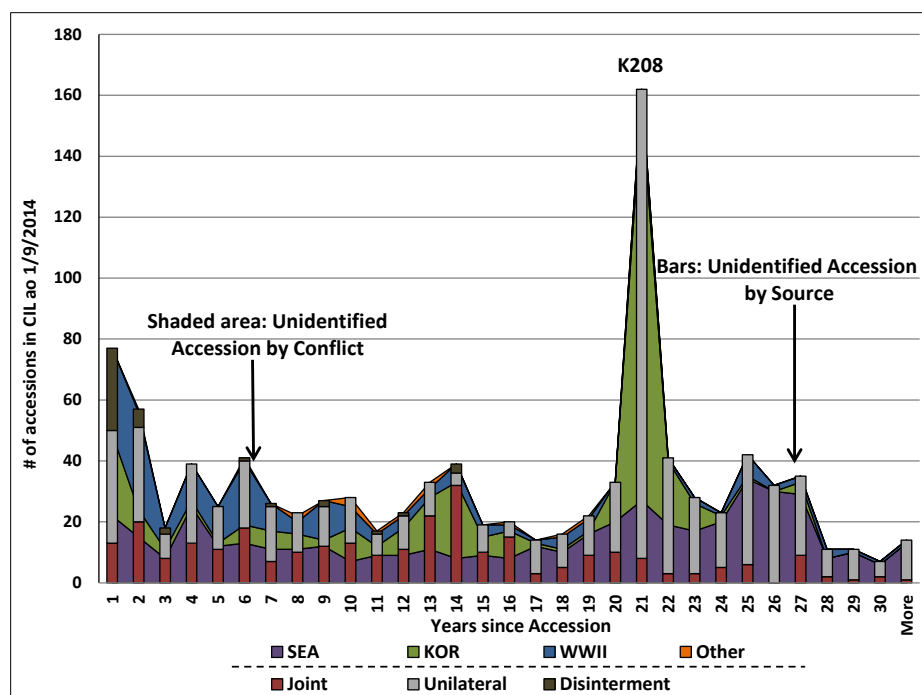


Figure 5. Inventory of Possible Biological Evidence in the CIL in Years since Accession

Once a positive identification is made and the process has undergone a peer review for quality assurance, the CIL prepares the identification package. This package includes reports, when available, from CIL, AFDIL, R&A, and LSEL. The CIL Scientific Director certifies the identification, and signs-off on the package. The report is forwarded to the appropriate SCO, and it is presented to the primary next of kin (PNoK). If the PNoK accepts the identification, then the individual is accounted for, and the case is closed. If the PNoK does not accept the report's findings, the report is forwarded to the Armed Forces Identification Review Board (AFIRB) for adjudication.³⁸

6. External Communication

The primary vehicle for outreach used by DPMO is through Family Member Updates (FMUs), which are held seven or eight times per year in major metropolitan areas across the country. During the FMUs, government officials from all Accounting Community organizations brief attendees and meet with family members to discuss the details of their cases and to answer specific questions. These events also assist in the collection of FRSs, which is performed onsite by AFDIL staff. DPMO also holds two annual briefings in Washington, D.C.: one for Vietnam War families, and another for Korean and Cold War families. These events are designed to keep family members informed of the U.S. Government's worldwide mission to account for those still missing, and to discuss in detail the latest information available about their specific cases. The

³⁸ This process may differ for group identifications.

location of these events makes it possible for senior government officials to attend, and for families to access Washington-based offices related to POW/MIA matters.

Figure 6 below shows attendance by fiscal year at FMUs and annual briefings. Since 1995, Korean and Cold War families have constituted the greatest number of attendees to FMUs, while SEA families' attendance has slowly declined. Attendance of WWII families has increased dramatically since 2000. The number of first-time attendees to FMUs is also increasing. These are mainly representatives of WWII families, though there are some third generation and younger family members of missing SEA service members who are attending FMUs for the first time.

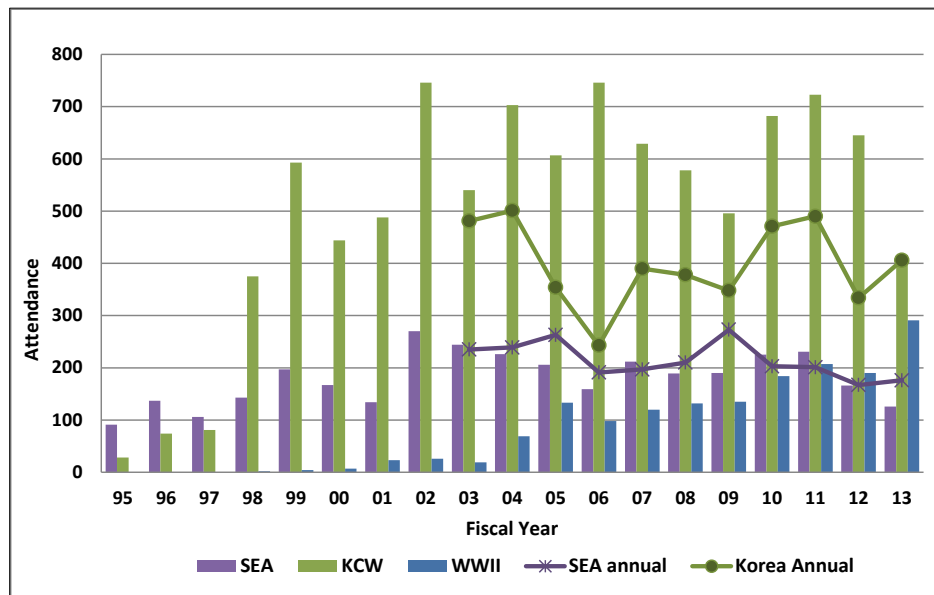


Figure 6. Attendance at Family Member Updates

In addition to organizing outreach events, both DPMO and JPAC have dedicated staff to respond to external requests for information. While neither is required to provide an annual report to Congress, both are expected to respond to all Congressional inquiries in a timely manner. The SCOs are intended to be the primary interface with family members, but DPMO and JPAC also receive information requests from families. When a member of the Accounting Community responds to a request for information, a courtesy copy is normally provided to JPAC, DPMO, and the appropriate SCO for situational awareness.

DPMO and JPAC must also respond to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for document declassification, which is a labor- and time-intensive process for both organizations.

7. An Evolving Accounting Process

As described above, accounting for persons missing from past conflicts is a multi-step process encompassing a number of sub-processes (see Appendix D). It would be an

oversimplification to portray the process as a relatively standard, linear, predictable sequence of events from the time that analysts identify a lead to the time that the U.S. Government accounts for the missing service member. In fact, in many cases the process is nonlinear and becoming increasingly so. As disinterment, unilateral turnovers, and unscheduled recoveries play a more prominent role in the acquisition of remains, the multi-step accounting process will deviate significantly from the linear process. For example, remains accessioned into the CIL from a unilateral turnover may not have been significantly researched prior to accession. Research, however, is likely to be needed to determine a short list of possible missing personnel, or to confirm the historical feasibility of identification of missing personnel. Likewise, as organizations have assumed new duties that have historically been performed by others, steps in the process of identification have been added, skipped, or modified. For example, DPMO recently began conducting investigations to assist JPAC with WWII losses, but its process for approving investigations is different from JPAC's IDB process for approving investigations.

This nonlinear process is exacerbated by the absence of clear authorities and documentation of roles and responsibilities for each step in the process.

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3. Findings and Recommendations

A. Organization Structure

This section addresses the first and fourth directives of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DSD) tasking:

- Assess the current structure of the Personnel Accounting Community and determine if the structure is effective and cost-efficient.
- Provide recommendations for alternative organizational structures and processes to conduct this mission effectively.

As previously mentioned, the past conflict accounting mission is conducted by multiple organizations in DoD including DPMO, JPAC, AFDIL, LSEL, and the SCOs. Appendix E shows the current organizational structure of the Accounting Community and how each organization reports through a different chain of command. This highly decentralized structure, coupled with the absence of a single, accountable individual to lead the accounting community effort, have resulted in duplication of activities among organizations, inefficiencies, and institutional conflict.

The following sections present CAPE's findings and recommendations from this assessment.

1. Unity of Command

Current statutory and DoD guidance assign responsibility for the accounting mission to many organizations and each reports through a different line of authority. This fragmented structure has led to dysfunction between DPMO and JPAC and has contributed to an atmosphere of mistrust and unproductive behavior by individuals within the community. While the current leadership has made notable changes in trust and communication, these changes are personality-dependent. Problems are likely to persist or re-emerge unless the functions of DPMO and JPAC are integrated under a single, accountable leader with the authority to enforce policies and procedures throughout the accounting community.

As part of its assessment, the CAPE team weighed the pros and cons of multiple organizational options for each of the components of the community. In addition to examining the pros and cons of a unified DPMO and JPAC organization (see Appendix H), the team considered alternative institutional leadership options including various Principal Staff Assistants in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, or a

geographic or functional Combatant Commander. The team also examined several new organization and management arrangement options including consolidation within a Defense Agency, a Defense Field Activity, or another organization to improve efficiency and mission focus.

Recommendation:

- i. Unify DPMO and JPAC into a single Defense Agency with a new name.

The new agency must be “re-branded” to reinforce integration of the existing, disparate institutional cultures. The new organization should report to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and be civilian-led with a 2-star military deputy. While the agency could, in theory, be headed by a General Officer/Flag Officer (GO/FO), a civilian lead is preferable to ensure better continuity of command for the community in performing this complex mission.

Other agencies in the community may remain within their existing organizational structures for now. While these other agencies perform additional duties beyond supporting the past conflict accounting mission, they would accept tasking and case prioritization from the director of the new defense agency in their roles and missions related to past conflict accounting. Appendix I illustrates the proposed organizational structure.

The new agency must be appropriately resourced and supported by DoD to handle all legal, contracting, and operational support issues that may arise during the conduct of the personnel accounting mission. This is particularly important because, under the proposed organizational structure, the new agency would not report to a geographic combatant command, which would typically provide all of these services to a subordinate component. The CAPE team considered keeping the new organization under PACOM since it provides considerable support and resources to JPAC, but concluded that the benefits of being in a non-warfighting and geographically-neutral organization outweighed those benefits, particularly since there are mechanisms to obtain similar support through the Joint Staff.

2. Unity of Effort, Duplication, and Transparency of Resources

Appendix F highlights the areas of duplication and overlap across the Accounting Community. Duplication and decentralization exist primarily in the areas of support staff, external communications, R&A, life science analysis, policy, plans, negotiations, and contracting for genealogical histories. The largest concentration of manpower resides in R&A, with 156 individuals performing this function within JPAC and DPMO. Within JPAC, this function exists in both the J2 and CIL, producing further duplication.

Some of this duplication is also very costly. For example, in FY 2013 JPAC spent \$97,000 on temporary duty (TDY) costs to conduct research in the National Capital Region (NCR). Although there seems to be some coordination between JPAC and

DPMO to reduce such travel, there are efficiencies to be gained by consolidating these functions.

Recommendation:

- ii. Merge resources between JPAC and DPMO and eliminate areas of duplication and overlap. Duplicative functions cited above must be streamlined into new directorates in the new agency.

A significant challenge for the Accounting Community involves the transparency of its finances. Multiple funding streams obscure the actual level of resources dedicated to the DoD past conflict accounting mission. Many Accounting Community organizations have other missions in addition to their missing persons accounting functions, but may not allocate their resources according to that delineation.³⁹ As a result, it can be difficult at times for the Comptroller community to validate the budget of each organization or to maintain oversight of the Accounting Community.

Recommendation:

- iii. The accounting community should prepare an annual report and make it available to the public. The report should present inputs and outputs, and incorporate some of the new output measures introduced in the Metrics section of this report. Congress has recently questioned how resources are expended in the Personnel Accounting Community. Preparation of this report should foster greater transparency and allow greater flexibility for mission-wide functions.

The new agency must have the authority, responsibility, oversight, and control to accomplish its mission efficiently and effectively. To avoid institutional conflict, it must be clear that the director and deputy director of the new agency are responsible for the following functions, among others: establishing priorities for the agency and the Accounting Community, including a priority list of the case workload for the Community; decisions on those sites that will be investigated and that will be excavated each year; allocation of resources; assignment of human resources, both functionally and geographically; development of a community-wide plan for increasing the capability and capacity for achieving personnel identification goals each year; and, adjudication of disputes at a level below the Secretary of Defense.

³⁹ For example, certain SCOs have personnel assigned to past conflict accounting who also support current day operations.

Recommendation:

- iv. Publish consistent policies and procedures and enforce them. Publish a new DoD Directive, and specifically address the following issues in the directive:
 - The new organization's roles, responsibilities, and interactions with other components of the Accounting Community. Define the contents to be included in an annual plan and report of the Accounting Community.

B. Subcomponent Process Changes

This section addresses the fourth directive of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DSD) tasking:

- Provide recommendations for alternative organizational structures and processes to conduct this mission effectively.

This subsection outlines additional changes that are warranted at various subcomponent organizations within the personnel Accounting Community. The recommendations are intended to improve efficiency within each of the respective organizations and for the larger personnel Accounting Community.

1. Central Identification Laboratory (CIL)

Due in part to inadequate communication, lack of unity of effort, and lack of unity of command, significant duplication has developed in activities conducted by the CIL and other organizations in the Accounting Community. In particular, the R&A and life science analysis functions that are carried out within other parts of JPAC, DPMO, and LSEL, are also present in the CIL. For example, several historians have transferred from JPAC J2 into the CIL to support work on disinterment. These individuals report through the CIL chain of command and duplicate similar activities performed within the JPAC J2 and DPMO organizations. Also, life science analysts in the CIL perform analyses very similar to those performed by personnel in LSEL.

Recommendation:

- v. Re-scope the CIL to focus solely on analyses of skeletal and dental remains, and rename it accordingly. It should focus where it has a comparative advantage, more specifically, on forensic analysis of human remains. Other analytic functions currently performed in the CIL that contribute to identifications, such as R&A, life science equipment analysis, and nonhuman remain analysis should be performed in separate groups within the Accounting Community.

2. The Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES)

Identification of service members from past conflicts and those from current operations is a bifurcated process: forensic anthropologists in the CIL have historically performed past conflict identifications, and forensic pathologists in the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) have performed current operation identifications. This division of duties is not clearly delineated in statute or in DoD policy,⁴⁰ resulting in

⁴⁰ 10 U.S.C. 1513 states that the identification of human remains must be made by a “practitioner of an appropriate forensic science.” DoD policy, DoDD 2310.07E, states that Commander, USPACOM shall “identify remains of unaccounted for personnel,” while 10 U.S.C. §1471 states that AFMES may

jurisdictional disagreements between the Accounting Community and AFMES. Currently, the Scientific Director of the CIL, a forensic anthropologist, certifies all identifications for past conflicts.

During the last few years, legal issues have arisen concerning the movement of remains from Europe to the United States and the interstate transfer of remains within the United States. These issues could arise more frequently in the future because of increased recovery missions in Europe and recent changes regarding the handling of remains in the DoD mortuary system.⁴¹

DoD needs to implement a consistent policy for identifications from past and current conflicts. Part of this policy should establish a medical examiner as the DoD authority for establishing a formal identification. Implementing this change, along with recommendations outlined above concerning the CIL, would address the legal issues outlined above, reduce redundancies, capitalize on specialization, and refine the division of labor between elements of the community.

Recommendations:

- vi. Require that a Medical Examiner be the DoD authority for making identifications for past conflicts, consistent with policies for current-day deaths.

Define and codify jurisdictional authorities in DoD regulations and applicable sections of the U.S.C., to require that a forensic pathologist (i.e., a medical doctor) be the DoD authority responsible for certifying the identifications of non-visually identifiable human remains for all conflicts. This ME should be part of the new personnel accounting agency, and be devoted entirely to supporting the accounting mission. Appendix J illustrates a proposed role for the ME in the recommended identification process. This role would be to receive, as appropriate, case reports from: the Skeletal and Dental Lab, AFDIL, LSEL, R&A, other organizations within the Accounting Community, and non-DoD entities such as NGOs or foreign governments as appropriate. Upon receipt of these reports, the ME would integrate the information as necessary, review the science, and execute the formal identification.

- vii. Revise, and develop as necessary, guidance regarding: a) handling of human remains in the United States and overseas; b) issuance of death certificates; c) transfer of remains; and d) release of remains for cremation. An ME should oversee, control, and direct such policies.

conduct a forensic pathology investigation if, among other things, the identity of the decedent or the cause of death is unknown and the decedent is a member of the armed forces. A draft DoDD 2310.mm, "Past Conflict Personnel Accounting" states that both JPAC and AFMES have the authority to identify remains of DoD personnel unaccounted-for from past conflicts, but that JPAC is the primary authority.

⁴¹ "DoD Final Report to the Executive Steering Committee: Mortuary Affairs, Medical Examiner System, and Casualty Assistance Support Study," November 27, 2012. See recommendation #20: Cessation of whole body cremations at Dover Port Mortuary.

- viii. Provide training to all personnel who might handle human remains, receive them from other countries or groups, or be in a position to transport them or oversee transport of remains.

3. Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL)

There appears to be no standard process for the CIL to send relevant artifacts to LSEL, nor a standardized process and template for LSEL to contribute to an identification report. These shortcomings are multi-fold. First, the CIL does not transfer evidence obtained during recoveries to LSEL in a timely manner. For example, in 2011 and 2012, fourteen of the twenty-five cases sent to LSEL involved personnel that had already been identified by the CIL. Also, on occasion LSEL did not receive cases until after the family had been notified and a funeral had taken place. In addition, there are concerns that LSEL's reports are not produced in a timely manner and that they contain more detail than is necessary to support the identification process. Finally, the CIL has created its own life science team, to perform analysis of life science equipment in-house, with the consequence that LSEL is currently under-used.

The 2013 memorandum of agreement (MOA) between JPAC and the Agile Combat Support Directorate established a process for the CIL to send life science evidence obtained from SEA recoveries to LSEL. The MOA calls for LSEL to complete analyses and reports within ninety days of receiving artifacts, or to notify the CIL if it cannot meet that deadline. Between June and August of 2013, the CIL sent 186 sets of artifacts from excavations to LSEL, some of which had been held at the CIL for a period of ten years. Prior to this, the LSEL received approximately ten cases per year from the CIL.

The MOA does not require that the CIL send artifacts from non-SEA recoveries to the LSEL. Historically, LSEL focused its work on aircraft and life science equipment from the Vietnam War. In recent years, however, it has expanded its catalogue of reference materials to include several hundred artifacts from the Korean War and WWII. As a result, it now has greater capability to provide analysis of artifacts from those conflicts.

The CAPE team also observed the following problem areas in the LSEL:

- The comingling of LSEL artifacts between government- and employee-owned items.
- The LSEL peer review process lacks appropriate objectivity—three to five employees (including a supervisor) review each other's work.
- LSEL personnel do not have educational backgrounds appropriate for the work required. The work should be performed by engineers, material scientists, chemists, physicists, or those with appropriate scientific credentials.
- Many LSEL artifacts have been purchased online from individuals, resulting in questionable authenticity of these artifacts.

- Formerly, LSEL personnel provided life sciences training to deploying personnel. LSEL continues to offer this training, but JPAC has not pursued this offer.

Recommendations:

- ix. Require: a) that artifacts relevant to LSEL work products are sent to LSEL shortly after recovery; and b) that LSEL provide a written report within a specified time period to ensure that it is included in identification packets that are sent to family members. Include these requirements in the new DoD Directive.
- x. Standardize LSEL products and reports.
- xi. Require that all life science equipment personnel be properly trained.
- xii. Fill life science equipment analyst positions with employees with appropriate education and training. The Air Force (AF) should consider recoding its billets to have the educational background appropriate to the work required—including engineers, material scientists, chemists, and physicists with appropriate credentials.
- xiii. Overhaul the peer review process to ensure objective, independent reviews.
- xiv. Review the process for acquisition of artifacts.
- xv. Eliminate comingling of personal and government artifacts and master references.

4. Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL)

AFDIL work on prior conflict accounting will benefit from the organization remaining within its current organizational structure. It has developed effective and responsive communication procedures with the CIL.

The CAPE team identified a weakness in government oversight and direct knowledge of AFDIL technical activities. Currently the AFDIL staff, including their current-day mission, consists of one military officer, four government civilians, and 134 contractors.⁴² The AFDIL scientific staff is currently 100 percent contractor, and the government staff has very limited technical insight. Government oversight of AFDIL activities must be strengthened.

Recommendation:

- xvi. Change the mix of government and contractor leadership and decision-making positions to add government personnel, from contractor positions, to avoid having contractors performing inherently governmental

⁴² The past conflict accounting mission consists of 65 contractors and zero government employees.

functions. Other parts of AFDIL and its operations should remain as currently structured.

5. Service Casualty Offices (SCOs)

The limited availability of FRSs is a bottleneck in the identification process today. In FY 2010, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) provided funding to the SCOs to make significant progress in collection of FRSs. As a result of this “surge” in FRS collection, identification of numerous personnel from the Korean War was accomplished. These identifications would not have been possible without the collection of the FRSs.

There are many areas where the SCOs have developed efficient and effective practices that could be used by their counterparts in other military Services. For example, contracting for genealogical services is an area in which it may be more efficient to evolve to one common contract for use by all of the SCO organizations. Also, we observe that 1) the Services use different terminology when referring to the SCOs; and 2) in the case of the Air Force, there are two entities involved in the past accounting mission, both causing confusion to families.

Recommendations:

- xvii. Ensure that the SCOs have adequate funding for FRS collection efforts.
- xviii. Assess whether the new organization should pursue a common contract process for genealogy services for use by the entire personnel accounting community. If so, one centralized point of contact (POC) should be established within the new organization to work with the SCOs to handle the unified contract. If a common contract is determined to be advantageous, the Army’s model of paying a fixed price per case, rather than an aggregate level-of-effort contract, should be considered.
- xix. Establish regular meetings between the SCOs to exchange best practices and to discuss issues, policy proposals, and lessons learned. Such meetings could be in person, via video teleconference (VTC), or via telephone conference calls.
- xx. Consider establishment of a common terminology to refer to the SCOs.
- xxi. Consider merging the Past Conflicts Branch of the AF Mortuary Affairs Division and the Air Force Missing Persons Branch under Casualty Matters.

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C. Business Processes

This section addresses the second half of the fourth directive of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DSD) tasking:

- Provide recommendations for alternative organizational structures and processes to conduct this mission effectively.

The following recommendations are intended to improve process flow within the personnel Accounting Community.

1. Inconsistent Family-Related Policies and Practices

Policies and statutes regarding family-related travel entitlements are interpreted differently among the military Services, which has created some discord among families. For example, differing interpretations have led to inconsistencies between the Services with respect to who receives funded funeral travel. The statute that the Services interpret differently is 37 U.S.C. §481(f), which specifies how many and which family members may be flown at government expense to a funeral.⁴³ In the case of the Vietnam War, the Air Force has interpreted this statute to “exclude” siblings of service members from funded funeral travel, unless the sibling is the primary next of kin, while siblings from other conflicts are permitted to have funded travel. Some Services cite Emergency and Extraordinary Expense (EEE) authority under 10 U.S.C. §127 to fund travel of surviving family members such as siblings.

Another policy that results in families being treated differently is the Coincidental Travel Assist (COIN Assist) program, under which DoD pays for air travel for up to two family members of missing persons from the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, to attend the annual conferences held in the District of Columbia (DC).⁴⁴ Because there is not a comparable annual conference for WWII, families of WWII-missing do not receive this benefit.

A third policy that treats family members differently is one in which DoD pays for a luncheon at the annual meeting for SEA families, but not at the Korean/Cold War annual meeting. There is no conference for WWII, and correspondingly no luncheon.

⁴³ 37 U.S.C. §481f(d), which addresses the recovery of remains from the Vietnam conflict, provides that travel and transportation allowances for attendance at the burial service for the deceased member covered by subsection (d) may be provided to any brothers, sisters, half-brothers and sisters, and stepbrothers and sisters of the deceased member only if no surviving spouse, children, or parents of the deceased have been provided such allowances. 37 U.S.C. §481f(c), which addresses the travel and transportation allowances of the siblings of other deceased service members, authorizes such allowances for attendance at both burials and memorial services and does not limit the eligibility for the allowances based on the receipt of the allowances by other family members.

⁴⁴ Coincidental Travel Assistance (COIN Assist) is a U. S. government program to keep family members of POWs and MIAs informed on the status of the accounting mission.

Recommendations:

- xxii. Institute consistent policies and practices for all family members of missing service members, regardless of the conflict in which they served.
- xxiii. Institute consistent policies and statutes regarding funeral travel entitlements.

Although we recommend that family-related policies and practices be consistent across conflicts, we do not make recommendations regarding the specific attributes of the policies to be adopted regarding funded travel or luncheons.

2. Managing Expectations: Characterizing the Missing

There are more than 83,000 MIAs from past conflicts, of which 42,000 are considered to be recoverable. By continuing to cite the larger figure, however, the expectation among the public is that DoD is actively pursuing more than 83,000 cases. Not only does this establish extremely high expectations from family members and the public, but it makes it very difficult to consider the feasibility of recovery in the prioritization of recovery efforts.

Currently, DPMO does not provide a complete list of missing personnel by name, circumstances of loss, and assessment of recoverability to the SCOs. Vietnam is the only conflict for which losses are categorized into active, no further pursuit (NFP), defer, or further pursuit. Although it might be difficult to categorize every WWII and Korean War loss into such categories, publishing the number presumed to be deep-sea losses, and the numbers that have no prospect of being found or recovered would assist in managing public expectations.

Recommendations:

- xxiv. Assess how to characterize to the public the more than 83,000 missing personnel.⁴⁵ This would establish realistic expectations regarding the recoverability of remains of missing personnel.
- xxv. Inform families of case categorization; consider providing families, and more specifically the primary next of kin (PNoK), with access to search and recovery reports currently prepared by CIL, even if nothing is found.

3. Prioritizing Recovery Sites

Recoveries can be influenced by pressures external to DoD. For example, while JPAC uses the Decision Matrix (DECMAT) as its primary decision support tool to prioritize cases that are placed on the MEL, some in the community have suggested that the matrix may be overruled by external pressure from families, family groups, and Congress.

⁴⁵ Consider the recommendation by the GAO report, GAO-13-619: that DoD "... establish criteria that can be used to prioritize the recovery effort for missing persons cases to reflect feasibility of recovery,..."

Recommendation:

- xxvi. Establish clear procedures for reviewing and accepting proposed adjustments to the MEL. Document changes to the MEL and reasons for any changes.

The IDB and EDB of JPAC determine if a case should be placed on the MEL and, therefore, serve as very important mechanisms to prioritize JPAC recovery operations. As currently designed, the IDB and the EDB are voting boards. The boards have little accountability, and no feedback loop to address improvements when recoveries are unsuccessful. A feedback with accountability would give the new organization a mechanism to drive improvement and reduce unsuccessful recoveries. The CAPE team recommends a restructuring of the existing investigation and excavation boards.

Recommendation:

- xxvii. Structure the IDB and the EDB as advisory boards rather than voting boards. Assign the board decision authority to either the Director or Deputy Director of the new organization. Board decisions need to be clear, recorded in a signed memo, communicated to those with a need to know, and made with enough lead time that the Department will be able to execute the mission. The investigation and recovery teams should be coordinated early to allow for complementary efforts.

The DoD needs to develop better guidance for the Accounting Community for dealing with third parties. For example, third parties often present evidence to JPAC to indicate a potential loss site. These leads might yield remains while being relatively inexpensive to investigate and excavate. Current policies, however, are not clear and are inconsistent.

Recommendation:

- xxviii. Establish policies concerning the extent to which the DoD will incorporate information from third parties, including NGOs, concerning potential investigation and excavation sites into its work.

4. Information Sharing

Information sharing is a critical component of the end-to-end accounting process in order to research, investigate, recover, and identify remains efficiently and effectively. Currently, numerous databases in use among the community members are not well-integrated, do not communicate, and the information they contain is difficult to share.

Currently, the Director, DPMO/DASD(POW/MPA) convenes monthly VTCs to share best practices and insights with representatives from the entire Accounting Community. These VTCs have improved communications among community organizations and should continue.

Recommendations:

- xxix. Develop a standardized case management tool, or database, that is accessible, with appropriate restrictions and controls, to all parts of the Accounting Community, including families. Establish appropriate access controls to differentiate between basic access and the ability to modify information content. As part of this, access should allow knowledge and awareness of the status of other parts of the community. For example, SCOs should be able to quickly respond to families seeking status updates instead of requesting updates from various organizations throughout the Accounting Community.
- xxx. Convene VTCs at a subordinate level to address issues in greater detail. These would augment the VTCs currently convened by the Director, DPMO/DASD(POW/MPA).

5. Contracting Authority

JPAC does not have contracting authority and must rely on external contracting authorities. As a result, when operating overseas, JPAC has very little latitude to make purchases in an expedient manner. This may cause delays or even cancellation of planned operations.

Currently, JPAC uses government credit cards that are capped at \$2,500 by the micro-purchase threshold.⁴⁶ Many expenses exceed this cap, making it difficult for JPAC to pay local workers and purchase essential items.

Under the new management arrangement, an assessment is needed to determine whether special authorities are warranted for the new defense agency. These authorities would provide more latitude to make purchases without contracts in foreign nations.

Recommendation:

- xxxi. Ensure that the new organization has the ability and the authorities needed to enter into and execute contracts for support as needed in a large number of nations. The new organization will require support to perform the contracting function.

⁴⁶ Micro-purchase means “an acquisition of supplies or services using simplified acquisition procedures, the aggregate amount of which does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold.” Micro-purchase threshold means \$3,000 except for the acquisition of services subject to the Service Contract Act where it is \$2,500. (48 CFR 2.101)

D. Metrics

This section addresses the third directive of the Deputy Secretary of Defense tasking:

- Evaluate whether or not the “200 accounted-for goal” is the optimal metric.

Currently, the Accounting Community as a whole has not been required to provide an annual report to Congress, nor has it identified official performance metrics. In the absence of mandated performance metrics, identifications of missing personnel have become the de facto metric for the Accounting Community, as evidenced by the “200 accounting-for goal” established in the 2010 NDAA. The Accounting Community, however, provides a wide range of services to family members, veterans, and the U.S. public beyond the identifications alone. Unfortunately, the community has not sufficiently tracked or measured these efforts in a way that consistently documents its performance in these functions. Also, the CAPE team observes that the metric of 200 identifications per year presents a number of challenges and unintended consequences as discussed below.

The pressure to increase the number of identifications per year is driving the community to seek easier cases, resulting in changes to the prioritization that JPAC uses for its recoveries of remains. This has led to an increasing focus on disinterment for World War II and Korean War remains and recovery missions that will yield a higher probability of success and higher numbers of remains (e.g., large aircraft crashes from World War II). The focus on increasing identifications per year has decreased the focus on SEA losses because there is a much a lower probability of obtaining remains or other evidence. Moreover, excavations in SEA are more expensive than those performed in Europe. For example, JPAC is more likely to require contract helicopter support in SEA missions than in European missions. Thus, the community must satisfy competing interests: pursuing the highest number of identifications by conducting low-cost/high-probability recoveries and disinterment, or pursuing answers to active family members by conducting high-cost/low-probability excavations and investigations.

Another problem with the 200 accounted-for goal is that only *new* identifications count toward achieving the goal. This ignores a significant level of effort that is often made by the CIL and AFDIL to identify additional remains of a previously identified individual. The resources needed for identifying additional remains is approximately 75 percent of the resources needed for an original ID, and requires anthropologists to produce reports of the same quality as those for original IDs. These efforts are fundamentally necessary, especially in cases of co-mingled remains, and they require a significant commitment of time and scientific and financial resources. Yet, the measurement of these efforts is entirely absent in the 200 identification metric.

Another problem is that the “200” metric itself is interpreted differently within the Accounting Community. While most agree that the objective is to create the capacity and capability to be able to make 200 identifications per year, with recognition that this number may not be achievable due to limitations beyond the control of the Department, others view the actual number of 200 IDs per year as a mandate embedded in statute.

Finally, a focus on the number of personnel identifications as the sole metric ignores the full range of efforts made by the Accounting Community to inform relatives about the fate of their family member. The provision of information is of great value to many families, even when recovery of remains leading to identification of missing personnel is unlikely. These efforts are largely not reported, and underappreciated, due to the lack of an official reporting vehicle for this information. This study found that considerable data is being collected by the various Accounting Community organizations that could lead to the development of numerous annual performance metrics. Many of these measures better reflect the full scope of activities of the community rather than the single-minded focus on the number of new identifications achieved each year.

Recommendations:

- xxxii. Implement a broad set of metrics, reflecting the full range of activities initiated and executed by the Accounting Community. A list of possible metrics for consideration is provided in Appendices K and L to this report.
- xxxiii. Prepare a consolidated annual report that documents these metrics and is available to the public.

A separate, but related issue involves the “Third Method of Accounting,” which allows for the identification and accounting-for an individual using material and circumstantial evidence in the absence of human remains. Some in the Accounting Community believe that a number of unaccounted-for cases could be resolved using this method. This method is currently prohibited by law for past conflict losses. As time passes, however, many of those still unaccounted-for will likely never be found.

The Third Method of Accounting would offer an option for the PNoK to accept that the Accounting Community has determined the circumstances under which the service member died, and that their remains either cannot be recovered or are extremely unlikely to be recovered. The PNoK would have the ability to reject such a finding, but for many families, this may represent a fully acceptable “accounting.” If, however, this policy were to be implemented, strict policies must be established governing its use. There are concerns that this method could be abused, and that the U.S. Government could use this as a reason not to pursue viable leads. This study makes no recommendations concerning use of the “Third Method of Accounting.”

4. Next Steps

On February 19, 2014, CAPE briefed the Secretary of Defense on findings and recommendations of this study. On February 20, 2014, the Secretary directed the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to develop a plan, within thirty days, “to increase to the maximum extent possible the numbers of missing service personnel accounted for annually, while ensuring timely and accurate information is provided to their families” (Appendix N).

Secretary Hagel approved the CAPE recommendation to consolidate relevant DoD assets into a single organization with oversight of and accountability for the entire mission of accounting for missing personnel. In addition, he asked Acting Under Secretary Lumpkin to propose ways “to increase the number of identifications, improve transparency for families and expand the case file system to include all missing personnel, including those from World War II.”

Implementation of selected recommendations will be a complex and challenging task requiring detailed guidance in the form of DoD Instructions and Directives (see Recommendation iv). Merging organizations, defining new roles and responsibilities, and establishing new practices and lines of communication, while continuing to perform the ongoing accounting mission, is likely to cause some turmoil in the near-term. Minimizing distractions, institutional disturbances, and potential points of contention will be essential to successfully establishing a new organization and implementing change.

Recommendations:

- xxxiv. Consider implementation of near-term limitations on hiring within JPAC, DPMO, LSEL, and AFDIL until further notice. Waiver requests should be approved by DSD or USD(P).
- xxxv. Develop a mechanism for COCOMs to provide necessary support to the Personnel Accounting agency, including logistical, lift, and individual augmentee resources. Provision of individual augmentees should include needed medics, unexploded ordnance specialists, and other necessary special skills. This mechanism could be an executive order (EXORD), and it should be updated annually. This is important since PACOM currently provides many of these support functions to the JPAC organization, which currently reports to it.

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Appendix A: Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF	Air Force	DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
AFB	Air Force Base	DoD	Department of Defense
AFDIL	Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory	DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
AFIRB	Armed Forces Identification Review Board	DPAP	Defense Procurement Acquisition Policy
AFME	Armed Forces Medical Examiner	DPMO	Defense Prisoner of War and Missing Personnel Office
AFMES	Armed Forces Medical Examiner System	DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
AOR	Area of Responsibility	DRU	Direct Reporting Unit
ASCLD	American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors	DSD	Deputy Secretary of Defense
AT&L	Acquisition, Technology and Logistics	EDB	Excavation Decision Board
CAPE	Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation	EEE	Emergency and Extraordinary Expense
CIL	Central Identification Laboratory	EUCOM	European Command
CIL-HI	Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii	EXORD	Executive Order
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff	FCoM	Full Cost of Manpower
COCOM	Combatant Command	FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	FMR	Financial Management Regulation
COIN Assist	Coincidental Travel Assistance	FMU	Family Member Update
CONUS	Continental United States	FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
CY	Calendar Year	FRS	Family Reference Sample
DASD	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense	FSO	Family Service Organization
DC	District of Columbia	FYDP	Future Years Defense Program
DCIPS	Defense Casualty Information Processing Directive	GAO	Government Accountability Office
DECMAT	Decision Matrix	GO/FO	General Officer/Flag Officer
DFARS	DoD Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement		

IA	Individual Augmentee	OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
ID	Identification		
IDB	Investigation Decision Board	OUSD	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense
IDPF	Individual Deceased Personnel File	P&R	Personnel and Readiness
IRB	Investigation and Recovery Brief	PACOM	Pacific Command
IRDB	Investigation and Recovery Decision Brief	PNOK	Primary Next of Kin
IT	Information Technology	POC	Point of Contact
IT	Investigation Team	POW	Prisoner of War
JCSD	Joint Commission Support Directorate	PR	Personnel Recovery
JFA	Joint Field Activity	PSA	Principal Staff Assistant
JPAC	Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command	Punchbowl	National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific
JTF-FA	Joint Task Force Full Accounting	R&A	Research and Analysis
KCW	Korea/Cold War	RT	Recovery Team
KFE	Korean Forward Element	SCO	Service Casualty Office
LSEL	Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory	SEA	Southeast Asia
M	Million	TDY	Temporary Duty
MC	Marine Corps	TOA	Total Obligation Authority
ME	Medical Examiner	USAF	United States Air Force
MEL	Master Excavation List	USC	United States Code
MIA	Missing in Action	USD	Under Secretary of Defense
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement	USD(AT&L)	Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics
MPA	Missing Personnel Affairs	USD(C)	Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller
NCR	National Capital Region	USD(P)	Under Secretary of Defense, Policy
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act	USD(P&R)	Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness
NEA	Northeast Asia	USRJC	United States-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs
NFP	No Further Pursuit	VSO	Veteran's Service Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization	VTC	Video Teleconference
NoK	Next of Kin	WPAFB	Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
NPRC	National Personnel Records Center	WWII	World War Two

Appendix B: Deputy Secretary of Defense Tasking Memo to CAPE



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

AUG 26 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Organizational Structure Review of the Personnel Accounting Community

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2010 (Section 541) provided that the "Secretary of Defense shall implement a comprehensive, coordinated, integrated, and fully resourced program to account for persons...who are unaccounted for from the nation's conflicts" (from World War II forward), and that the Secretary of Defense shall provide such funds, personnel, and resources as the Secretary considers appropriate to increase significantly the capability and capacity to account for at least 200 missing persons.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a July 2013 report (GAO-13-619) finding that the Department has not completed a plan to meet the 200 persons accounted-for per year goal. The GAO also found that the personnel accounting community's fragmented organizational structure undermines DoD's capability and capacity to accomplish its mission.

To better posture the Department, the Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) to lead a review to:

- a) Assess the current structure of the personnel accounting community and determine if the structure is effective and cost efficient.
- b) Determine how the various components of the personnel accounting community (e.g., Defense POW/ Missing Personnel Office, and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command) support the identification process.
- c) Evaluate whether or not the "200 accounted-for goal" is the optimal metric.
- d) Provide recommendations for alternative organizational structures and processes to conduct this mission effectively.

I direct CAPE to provide recommendations to me within 120 days. All DoD components will provide CAPE full cooperation and access to personnel, data, documents, and facilities needed to conduct this review.



OSD009142-13

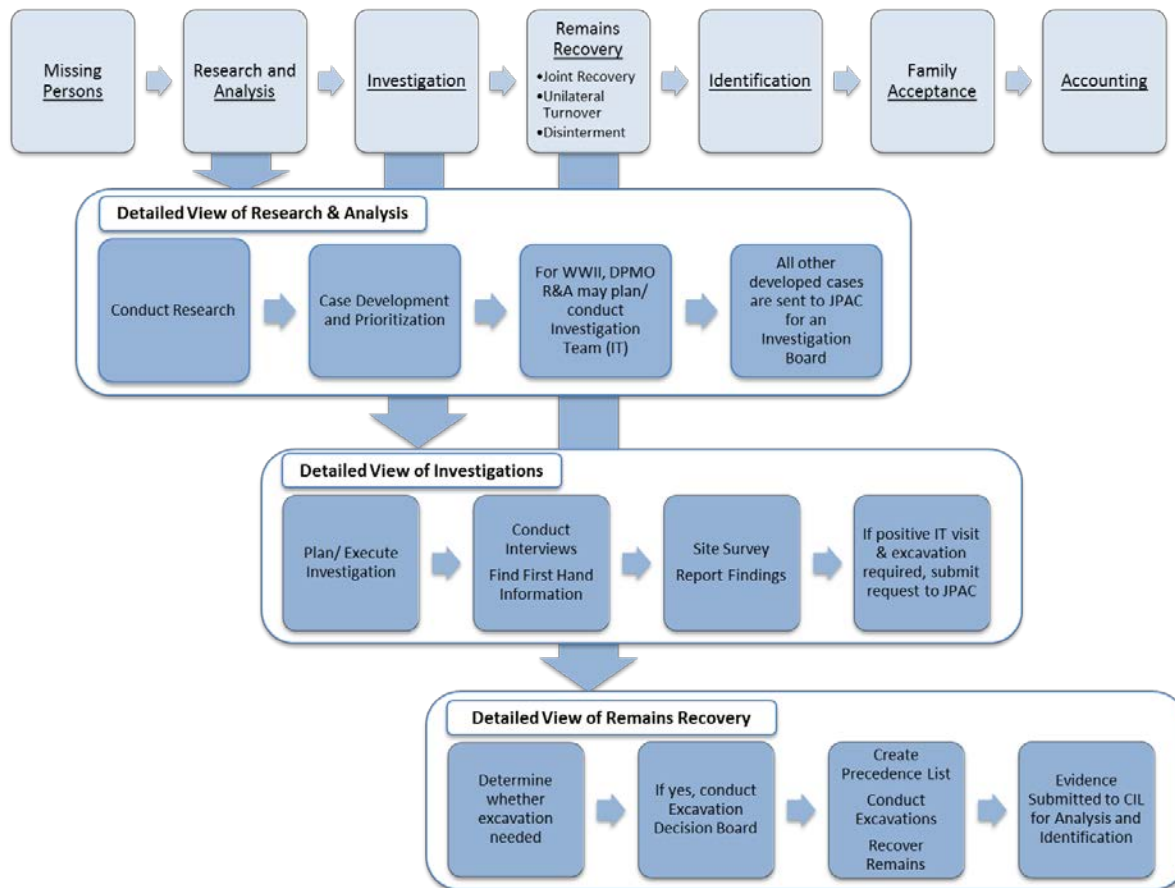
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Appendix C: Team Members and Key Study Meetings

- Team Members: CAPE (4), IDA (4), Joint Staff (1)
- Kickoff Meeting, August 28, 2013
- Organizations Interviewed and Dates (all within CY 2013)
 - Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) (9/10, 10/9, 10/24)
 - Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command (JPAC) (9/16-9/19)
 - U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) (9/19)
 - JPAC CONUS Annex (9/25)
 - Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) (10/15-10/16)
 - Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) (10/15)
 - Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL) (10/30)
 - Service Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Offices (SCOs)
 - Army (10/29)
 - Air Force: Mortuary Affairs Office (10/16), Missing Persons Office (11/6)
 - Navy (11/5)
 - Marine Corps (10/23)
 - Joint Staff (8/29)
 - Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (10/15)
 - Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (10/28)
 - OSD Components:
 - Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (9/9, 11/15)
 - Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (9/24)
 - Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Comptroller (9/9)
 - Office of the Director of Administration and Management (9/3)
 - Office of the General Counsel (10/31)
 - Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs (10/28)
 - Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (8/29)
 - Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer (9/6)
 - Office of the DoD Inspector General (9/4, 9/24, 11/13)
 - Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (11/13)
 - House Armed Services Committee Staff (10/31)
 - Government Accountability Office (9/13)
- Outbrief Meetings:
 - Acting, Deputy Secretary of Defense; Acting, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (1/23/2014)
 - Secretary of Defense; Acting, Deputy Secretary of Defense; Acting, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; General Counsel; Director of the Joint Staff; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (2/19/2014)

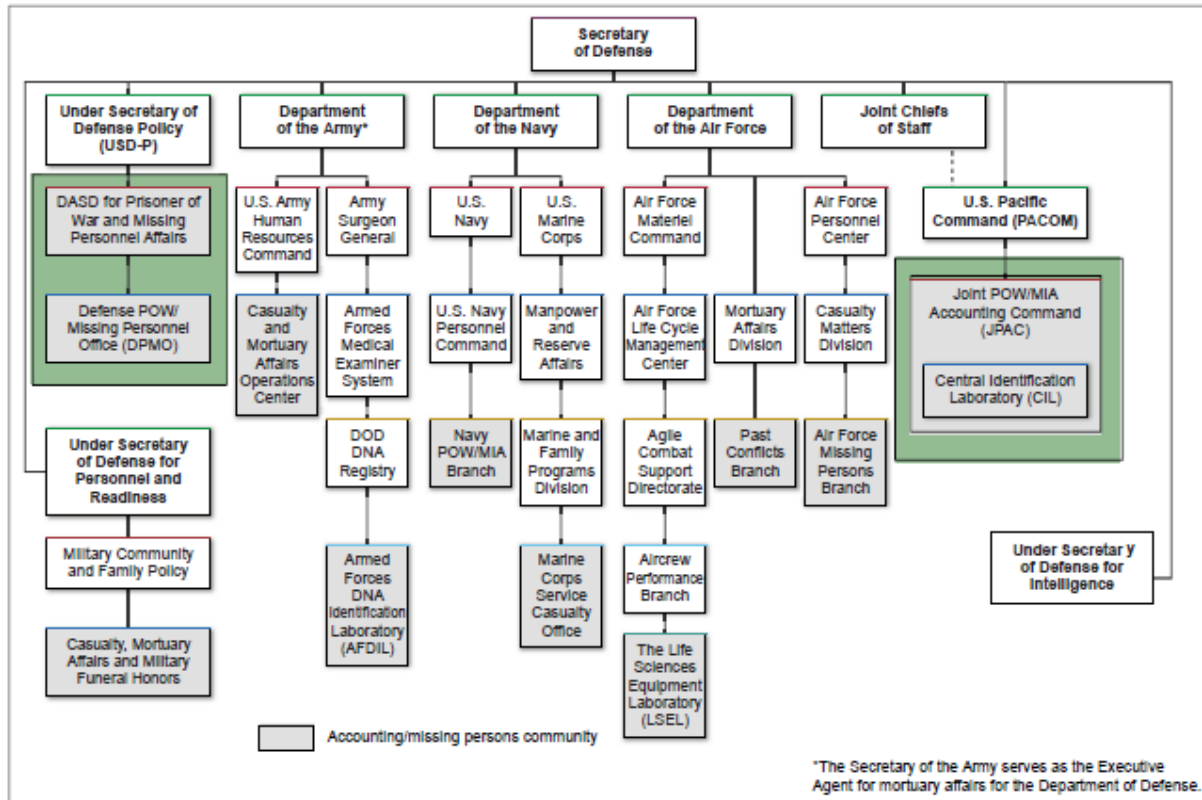
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Appendix D: Current Process for Identifying Human Remains of Missing Persons



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Appendix E: Current Organizational Structure



Accounting/missing persons community

*The Secretary of the Army serves as the Executive Agent for mortuary affairs for the Department of Defense.

Source: GAO analysis of DOD information.

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Appendix F: Areas of Duplication

Function	FY13 Assigned Manpower by function						TOTAL
	DPMO	JPAC	CIL	AFDIL	LSEL	SCOs	
Command Staff/Headquarters	10.0	19.0					29.0
Public Affairs/External Communications	16.0	12.0					28.0
Comptroller and Support and Legal	15.5	11.0					26.5
Policy, Plans, and Negotiations	18.0	9.0					27.0
Research and Analysis	63.0	75.0	18.0				156.0
Life Sciences			8.0		5.0		13.0
Forensic Identification			55.0	65.0			120.0
Material Identification			28.0				28.0
J3 - Operations		34.0					34.0
Operations: Investigations and Recovery		169.0					169.0
Detachments		21.0					21.0
Manpower/Logistics/Communications		84.0					84.0
Service Casualty						27.4	27.4
	122.5	434.0	109.0	65.0	5.0	27.4	762.9

Note: Duplicative functions highlighted in red.

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Appendix G: Past Conflict Accounting Community Resources

Past Conflict Accounting Community Resources, FY13 (costs in millions)						
	Costs	<u>Authorized</u>		<u>Assigned</u>		
		Military	Civilian	Military	Civilian	Contractor
DPMO	\$19.7	46	81	29	80	14
JPAC	\$87.3	265	355	245	255	43
LSEL (includes Civpay)	\$0.5	0	5	0	5	0
AFDIL	\$10.1	0	0	0	0	65
Army SCO	\$3.4	0	19	0	15	0
Navy SCO	\$0.5	0	5	0	5	0
Mortuary Expense for Navy and MC	\$0.1	0	0	0	0	0
Air Force Mortuary Affairs Office	\$0.4	0	3	0	3	0
Air Force Missing Persons	\$0.4	0	1.40	0.25	1.40	0
Marine Corp SCO	\$0.3	0	3	0	3	0
PACOM (Lift)	\$23.2	0	0	0	0	0
Total Direct	\$146.0	311	472	274	367	122
Indirect Costs						
Military Manpower (component cost)	\$38.1					
Augmentees (component cost)	\$5.9					
Total Indirect	\$44.0					
Total	\$190.0	311	472	274	367	122
Notes: The resources above are only for the past conflict accounting. Organizations who conduct both current day and past conflict missions were asked to report only resources allocated to past conflicts. Costs include mortuary expenses and civilian pay. Military manpower costs are calculated using CAPE's Full Cost of Manpower (FCoM) model for Component Costs.						

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Appendix H: Pros and Cons of Unifying JPAC/DPMO into a Single Agency

Pros:

- Appoints one entity to be responsible for developing, coordinating, and overseeing implementation of Department of Defense (DoD) policy and exercising control and oversight for the entire accounting mission
- Focuses accountability on a single leader
- Eliminates duplication and decentralization in research and analysis, outreach and external communications, headquarter functions, and policy and plans
- Generates long-term cost savings due to more efficient use of staff, facility savings, temporary duty (TDY) savings
- Enables development of a common information technology (IT) system to facilitate case work
- Facilitates collection of data and of tracking metrics
- Eliminates multiple funding streams resulting in greater transparency and flexibility for mission-wide functions

Cons:

- Generates up-front costs due to support consolidation and development of a common IT system
- Needs careful transition management to mitigate potential
 - Near-term organizational turmoil
 - Expectations for immediate results

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Appendix I: Proposed Organizational Structure

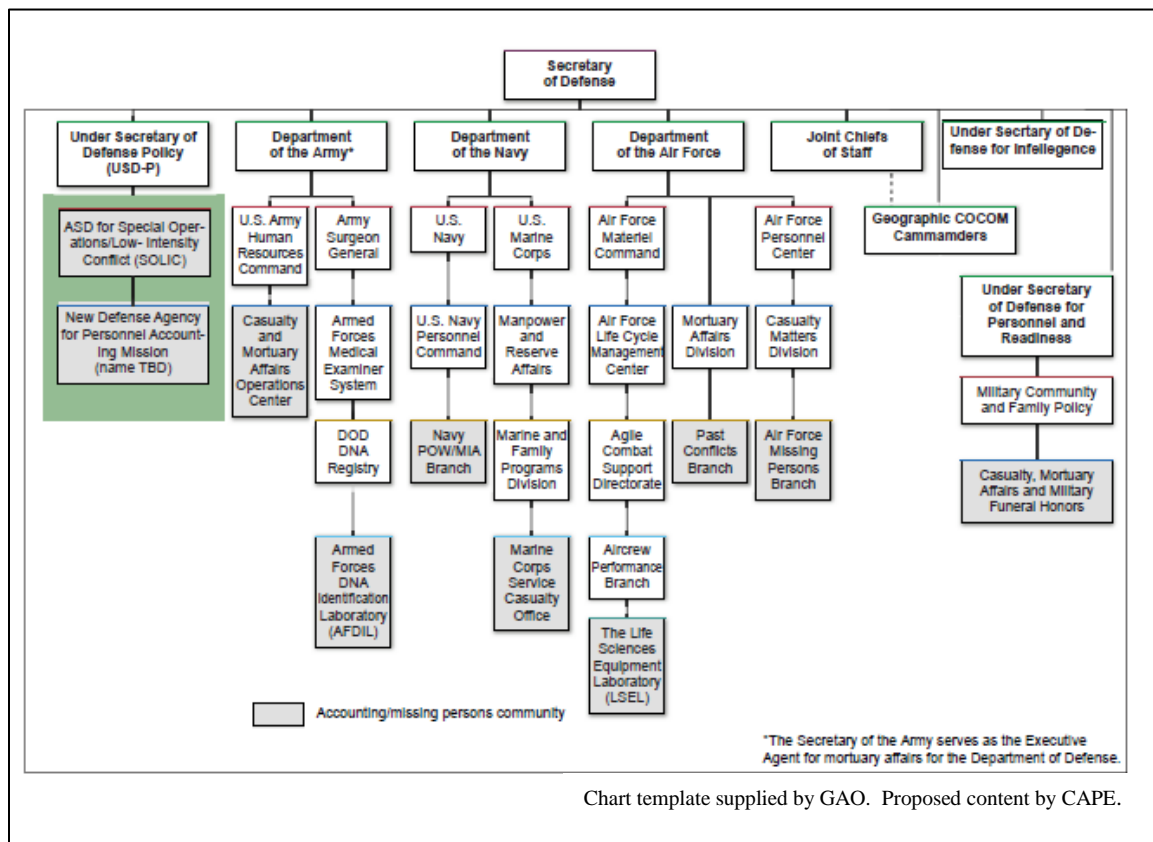
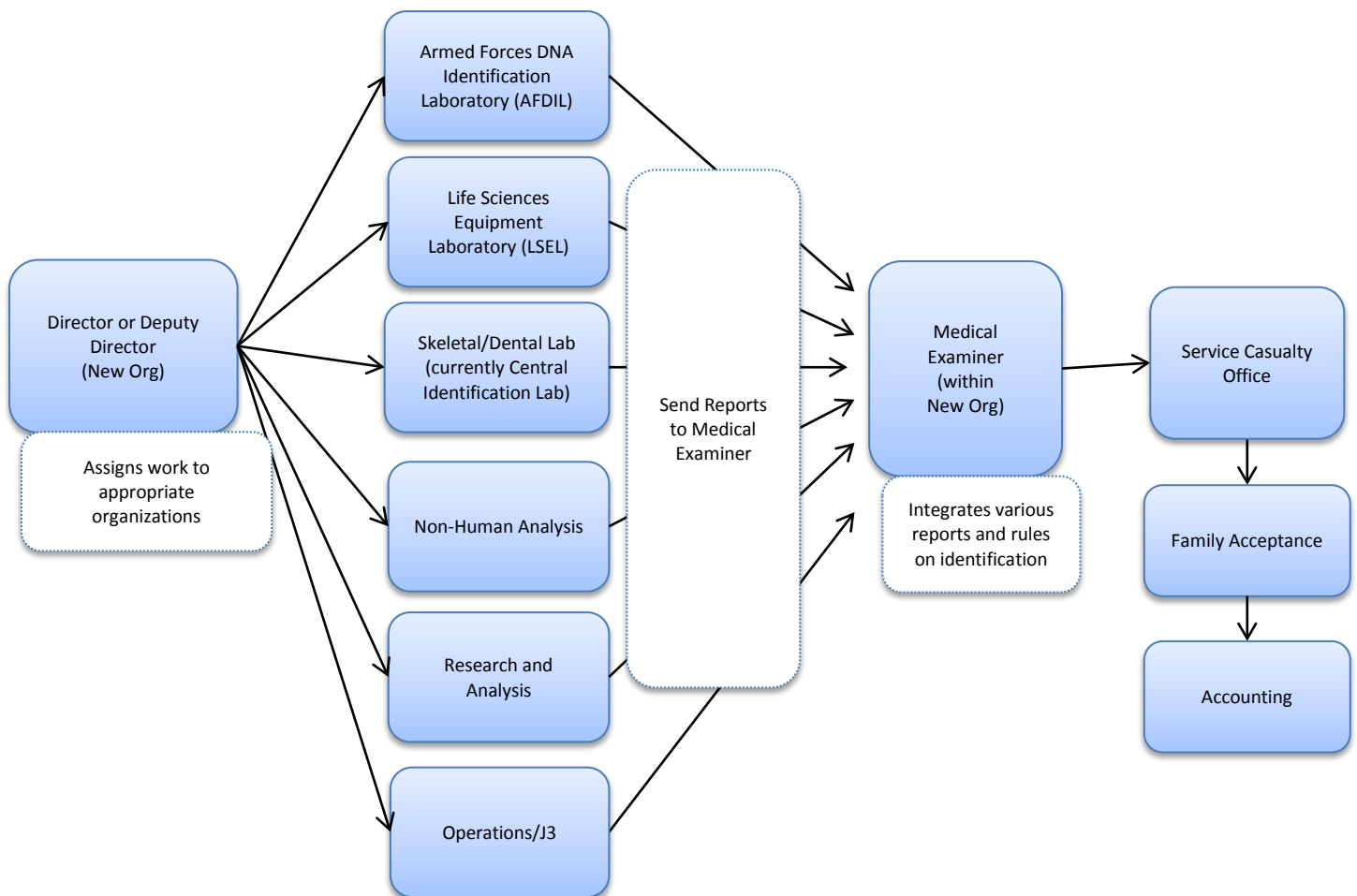


Chart template supplied by GAO. Proposed content by CAPE.

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Appendix J: Proposed ID Process



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Appendix K: Proposed Metrics for New Organization

The metrics proposed in this and the following appendices are examples of data that may be used to measure the progress of the personnel Accounting Community in the complex processes leading to completion of an identification, family acceptance, and accounting for missing personnel. These metrics, or a subset of these metrics, may be used to measure progress internally within the community or to report progress of this mission to organizations external to the Department of Defense (DoD).

- Number of family members attending Family Member Updates (FMUs) and annual conferences, including a separate listing of new attendees and attendees by conflict
- Number of Primary Next of Kin (PNoK) notifications provided to family members, representing new (significant) information about the unaccounted-for service member.
- Number of Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPF) scanned
- Percentage of missing personnel with case files
- Number of actionable leads (new cases added to case tracker)
- Number of inquiries responded to (congressional, families, others)
- Survey of family satisfaction
- Number of cases investigated and scheduled for recovery
- Identifications per investigative mission
- Number of missions executed/sites excavated
- Number of times each site has been visited/excavated
- Identifications per recovery operation
- Number of Russian documents declassified/accessed
- Number of battlefield zones cleared
- Number of accessions by conflict and source (i.e., excavation, unilateral turnover, disinterment)
- Number of identifications made and identification packages produced by conflict and source
- Time between when an identification package is prepared for review and is signed out
- Number of remains identified for the first time
- Number of additional remains identified
- Number of samples extracted for DNA analysis
- Number of other cases that do not count towards new identifications, i.e., Alaska Aircraft crash, disinterred group remains
- New techniques developed to assist in the identification of remains from past conflicts

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Appendix L: Proposed Metrics for Subcomponent Organizations

Service Casualty Office (SCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Average number of days from the time that an identification package is signed out until the family is notified – Number of families for which genealogical chart is “complete,” and the annual funding spent on this research – Number of Family Reference Sample (FRS) kits sent to family members, and the number received by AFDIL – Number of cases for which an acceptable amount of DNA samples have been collected
Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of DNA tests conducted – Number of remains sampled for DNA that contribute to a new identification – Number of remains sampled that prove to be “additional remains” of an already identified loss – Average number of days from the receipt of a DNA sample to DNA sequencing – Number of FRSs sequenced – New techniques developed to assist in identifying remains from past conflicts
Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of cases received and processed – Average time from receipt of case until delivery of report – Number of reports prepared to support identification packages

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Appendix M: Additional Business Process Improvement Recommendations

New Defense Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish a new DoD Directive, and specifically address the new organization’s roles, responsibilities, and interactions with other components of the Accounting Community. Also, define the contents to be included in an annual plan and report of the Accounting Community. – Institute consistent policies and practices for annual events for all family members of missing service members, regardless of the conflict in which they served. – Institute consistent policies and statutes regarding funeral travel entitlements. – Structure the investigation and excavation boards as advisory boards. Assign the board decision authority to either the Director or Deputy Director of the new organization. – Establish a standardized case management tool, or database, that is accessible, with appropriate restrictions and controls, to all parts of the Accounting Community, including families. – Establish regular working group meetings via video teleconference (VTC) for Accounting Community. – Require a Medical Examiner (ME) to be the Department of Defense (DoD) authority for making identifications for past conflicts, consistent with policies for current-day deaths. – Re-scope the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) to focus solely on analyses of skeletal and dental remains. – Centralize all life science equipment analysis for past conflicts under one organization. Currently this work is performed at both CIL and LSEL. – Conduct research in the National Capital Region (NCR) by local researchers, when possible. – Ensure new organization has the ability and the authorities needed to enter into and execute contracts for support as needed in a large number of nations. The new organization will require support to perform the contracting function.
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Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Overhaul the peer review process to ensure objective, independent reviews. – Standardize products and reports. – Eliminate comingling of personal and government artifacts and master references. – Review the process for acquisition of artifacts. – Fill life science equipment analyst positions with employees with appropriate education and training.
Armed Forces DNA ID Lab (AFDIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Change the mix of government and contractor leadership and decision-making positions to add government personnel, from contractor positions, to avoid having contractors performing inherently governmental functions.
Service Casualty Office (SCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure the SCOs have adequate funding for FRS collection efforts. – Establish regular meetings between the SCOs to exchange best practices and to discuss issues, policy proposals, and lessons learned. – Consider consolidating genealogy contracts. – Consider establishment of a common terminology to refer to SCOs.
Air Force (AF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consider merging AF Mortuary Affairs Office for Past Accounting and AF Missing Persons Office.

Appendix N: Secretary of Defense Tasking Memo to USD(P)



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

FEB 20 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: DoD Structure for Past Conflict Personnel Accounting

After intensive review, I have determined that the Department of Defense must change the way it manages accounting for personnel missing from past conflicts. I have directed the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to provide me, within 30 days, a plan for how to organize the Department most effectively to increase to the maximum extent possible the numbers of missing Service personnel accounted for annually while ensuring timely and accurate information is provided to their families.

This plan should address organizational and process changes required to consolidate all Departmental assets into a single, accountable entity that has oversight of all personnel accounting resources, research, and operations across the Department. It should propose methods to maximize the number of identifications, improve transparency for families, reduce duplicative functions, and establish a system for centralized, complete, fully accessible personnel case files for missing personnel. At a minimum, this plan should articulate recommendations for changes to civilian and military personnel policies, contracting and acquisition policies, statutory and regulatory authorities, facilities, budgets, and procedures to ensure effective oversight of laboratory operations. This effort should be informed by past studies and reviews.

The Military Departments, Combatant Commands, and OSD Components shall provide the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy with all information and materials needed for this planning effort. This is a top priority for the Department.

I am deeply committed to the fullest extent possible the accounting for missing Service members. Upon receipt of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy's plan, I am prepared to direct changes to use the Department's resources for this mission more effectively and efficiently.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald Rumsfeld", with a horizontal line underneath.